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No 164 Aug/Sept 2004

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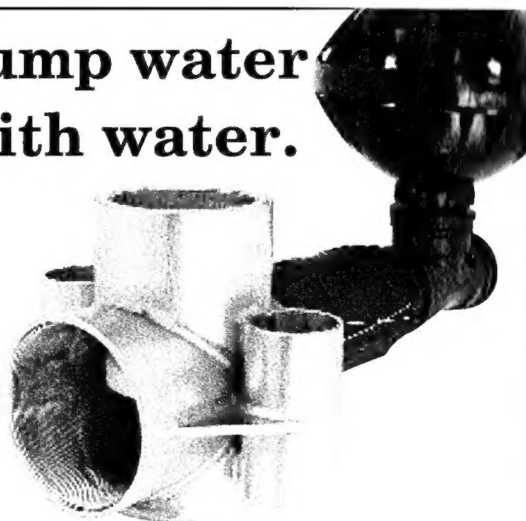
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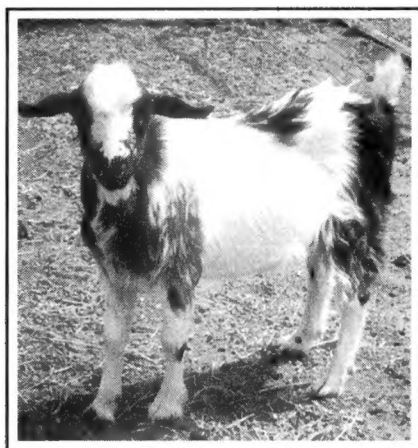
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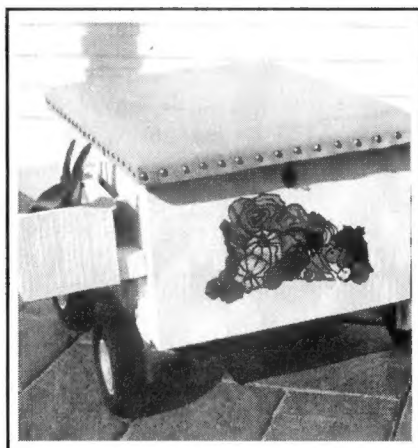
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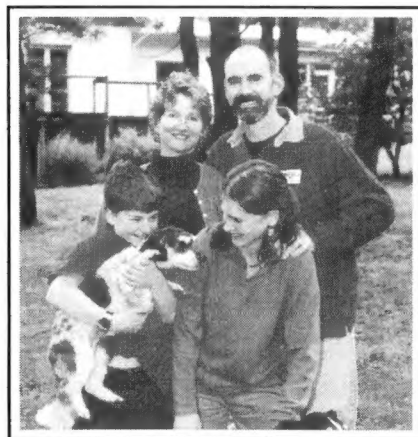
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## COVER PHOTOS

**Front Cover:** Jodie and Peter Kewley know a thing or two about muesli. They have built a successful business from providing healthy breakfasts for a growing band of enthusiastic consumers. Read their inspiring story on page 6. Photo by Marcel Aucar.

**Back Cover:** A well-planned established garden will reward the gardener in myriad ways, providing flowers and fragrance for the home, page 46, and herbs with a multitude of uses, pages 18 and 51. Photo by Suni Miller.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

Published by Grass Roots Publishing Pty Ltd, Box 117, Seymour 3661. Ph: 03-5792-4000, fax: 03-5792-4222. For classifieds see page 75.

We take great care in selecting and verifying all material that appears in the magazine, but do not necessarily share the views expressed in letters and articles, nor do we accept responsibility for the accuracy of statements made by contributors. Printed by Newsprinters P/L, Melbourne Rd, Shepparton 3630.

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## GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

Cough, sneeze, snuffle and blow, that's all you can hear reverberating around the office; in fact, the place is becoming reminiscent of the infectious ward of a hospital. What's happened to our natural immunity and robust good health? Our advice is to watch those sniffles and if you're unfortunate enough to succumb, treat them with the respect they deserve or you could find yourself barking like a dog or stopping traffic with your red nose. Yes, we know, lots of hot lemon and honey and echinacea and garlic on the soles of the feet and bed rest. I'm anxious about mentioning the latter; it's deadline, so there is no slumbering in bed for our busy team. David's happy, he's germ free and keeps admonishing us to give up the pills and use his foolproof cure; you know, the one where you squeeze a lemon into a glass then fill another glass with whisky. Pour lemon into the sink, down the whisky and head off to bed. The tiny headache that follows is a small price for the cure. Would cooking sherry work as well?

Luckily, Sabrina and baby Marcus haven't been to the office recently, we'd hate the bub to catch our germs. Sabrina has been in a few times and even put the Feedback pages together. When the baby has accompanied her he's been sleeping snugly in the pram. He's a contented easy baby. 'A regular feed, cuddle and clean nappy is all he requires', his proud mum says. Ah, if only all babies were like that!

Prior to germs and eucalyptus taking over, our office smelt like a flower shop and looked rather like one too, all thanks to the generosity of a reader. Out of the blue we received a phone call from a reader up north who said she felt totally inspired about GR and asked for our address. When we took the call we were so bowled over by the enthusiasm coming down the line we forgot to ask the caller's name. She said she read the magazine until she fell asleep with it. A day later the most wonderful, colourful bunch of flowers arrived with a card saying: 'Thank you, you're all wonderful. Just sharing my feelings'. Unreal! We filled two big

vases and got pleasure from them for weeks; even walking into the office of a cold morning was less daunting with such a bright and cheery welcome. Thanks 'Inspired' for your thoughtful and generous gesture.

Have you noticed how frequently stories are appearing in the press about the city dwellers' penchant for a life change to rural or beachside environs? 'It's a startling new trend', I heard an ABC interviewer say on the radio, while one eminent professional magazine wrote of 'an extraordinary shift occurring . . . all around the country people have been reviewing their careers and rejecting their previous working and living patterns'. Apparently, the well-known TV series a couple of years back gave the cultural change that was already in full swing an identifiable name and fuelled discontent urban dwellers were experiencing as they rushed through each week. Yep, just as heaps of GR readers decided to swap a light wallet and heavy mortgage for a simpler, more meaningful lifestyle up to three decades ago, people in the 'burbs are trading successful, demanding careers for time with family in a less pressurised environment. They're discovering too the beauty of the bush, freshly grown food, simple fun and the rewards of being part of a community. Decades ago it was called dropping out, then it became an alternative lifestyle. Later it was imbued with nobler thinking and became known as voluntary simplicity. I wonder what the current exodus of starry-eyed relocators will be called? Neville Cherry from Tassie sent the thought-provoking article in for us to ponder over. I'm recommending 'start agains', what's your suggestion?

We have a lot of fun in this office and anything or anyone is fair game for gentle ragging. Suni's racy rendition of 'Down Home on the Farm' and the detailed workmanship of Marcel and his tank stand have received much attention. Initially, it sounded as though Marce was joining the wooden sections with dozens and dozens of hinges. I conjured up an image of endless moving parts. 'It can't be hinges he needs', I said to Suni,

'or else he really is building the Eiffel Tower'. Sue put her opinion forward and consulted her husband, and later when Mary innocently queried the construction process Suni responded saying, 'For heavens sake, no more hinges please - I'm sick of them'. 'We're only trying to save you from 50 readers' letters full of advice', we replied. Marce says it's under control, Suni's muttering about the *Arc de Triomphe* or *Sacré Coeur* next, and we others are still wondering if he meant grip connectors, wall plates, joist strips or brackets.

We received a chatty note recently from Heather Powell who wrote the 'Combustion Stove Saga' in GR 158. Heather and hubby David didn't know what they were getting into when they bought an old house with a slow combustion cooker. Heather's graphic description of finding asbestos and charred studs was enough to put even the most intrepid renovator off. Good news though: 'We thoroughly enjoy our replacement stove, a Nectre Bakeoven. It is so much easier to stoke than the old type of fuel stove, and it has a much bigger firebox, so doesn't need filling all the time. We think it's just great and it starts so easily on cold frosty mornings, the real test of a stove'. Don't be afraid to trade in your old slow combustion or fuel stove. Heather's advice to look around and choose an efficient, user-friendly model is heartening.

When we checked through this issue we were stunned by the great mix of articles in it. Fancy having the initiative to set up a muesli making business. And what about growing your own cotton, or finding some decent uses for all the lovely old doilies that are family heirlooms. There are plenty of projects to try and some tasty fare to keep the cold at bay. Sue was taken with the feijoa and has just planted one. You might start thinking about a shed. Bother this men-only stuff, we all need a shed or two to store our collections of recyclable objects. A friend recently said collecting wasn't recycling, it was hanging onto useless junk. That's not true, is it? One day we'll be pleased we've got all those papers and buttons and jars and old seeds. ☘



# Making Muesli Magic

by Jodie Kewley, Red Hill South, Vic.

**Jodie and Peter started making homemade muesli on a borrowed kitchen table to sell at markets. They just wanted a healthy brekky and a little pin money to travel with. Today their family business sells 40,000 packets of muesli a year.**

If an oracle had told us in 1993 that 10 years on we would be running a successful business from home, we would have been amazed. And we would not have been able to guess what the focus of the business would be. Back then, Peter was teaching full time at the local high school and I was juggling caring for our new baby and writing fiction, if and when time allowed. Peter was sick of school politics, but we were lucky and knew it. Peter had survived cancer, we had healthy children (Bonnie, age five, and baby Oliver), an old house with character, two and a half acres in a picturesque area, chooks, geese, ducks and a vegie patch. We also managed to get away each school break, even if it wasn't very far afield. But we yearned to travel overseas, and every time we put aside a little money for that purpose our car seemed to break down and the

repairs ate up our savings.

'What about producing something to sell at the market?' suggested a friend who was a founding member of the popular Red Hill Market. Good idea, but what? The Red Hill Market seemed to sell every type of food, plant and craft. Everything, that is, except muesli. We'd never been able to find a really good muesli in shops or markets, and we figured we probably weren't the only ones. Now, we're not health fanatics, nor nutritionists, but we knew what we wanted in a muesli – no sugar, honey or oils, just raw rolled oats with loads of fruit, nuts and seeds. Making a trial batch was easy: we simply put in all the things we liked and then experimented to create five varieties – Roasted Hazelnut, Roasted Almond, Tropical, Traditional and Wicked. Coming up with a business name didn't take long –

Red Hill Muesli Company. Actually preparing it for sale was another matter!

## GETTING SET UP

For a start, all the food wholesalers were located on the other side of the city and most weren't interested in supplying us with the small amounts we required. Even those who agreed seemed to believe the civilised world ended at Frankston, a good half an hour from us, so we had to arrange for the ingredients to be delivered to my parents' house in the suburbs. And there was no guarantee (and still isn't!) that we would receive what we ordered. We've had 20 kilos of maize arrive instead of sunflower seeds, whole apricots instead of diced, manufacturing-grade sultanas instead of five-crown. Not to mention the many occasions when the ingredients weren't delivered at all.



Then there were suitable bags to source; scales, storage containers and a bag sealer to purchase; and labels to be made on the computer (which never printed out as and when they should). But our biggest hurdle was finding a registered kitchen (council-approved) in which to make the muesli. We simply didn't have the funds to rent one. Fortunately, a friend put us onto a local camp with a big stainless steel kitchen. (The camp's manager was kind enough to let us pay in muesli.) Of course, this meant we had to pack up all our ingredients and equipment and take it there and back each time and, if it rained, we couldn't make it at all because we had a ute and couldn't afford to get our goods wet. Still, we weren't complaining.

### TO MARKET

I'll always remember the excitement of our first market, a small one. It was cold, but I was fuelled by the vision of the crowd that would gather around our stall eager to buy our muesli. And I'll never forget the disappointment as the hours wore on and just four bags sold, three to a friend of ours. Suddenly, the whole idea of making and selling muesli seemed ridiculous.

However, we had put in too much effort to give up quite so quickly. The next small market we sold \$60 worth and were pleased. The one after that we sold \$100 worth and rejoiced. Local B&Bs began to approach us, as did a few of the shops. People who had

bought our muesli came back to buy more and they told their friends about it.

As the business expanded, so did our irritation at having to pack and unpack everything each time we made muesli at the camp. We contacted the local council about registering our own kitchen and were told we needed to install a hands-free tap, seal the floor, paint the walls and so on. While we were fixing up our kitchen, we found somewhere else to make our muesli – a disused milkbar in a rather seedy suburb nearby, next to a tattooist business. The rent was reasonable and it was a relief to be able to store everything there.

To cater for the increased demand for our muesli, Peter began teaching part-time. We took on more weekend markets, some an hour or so away. Our outgoing daughter, Bonnie, did a great job offering people tastings of our muesli. People rarely refused and almost always bought a bag as a result. There was, and still is, something contagious about the market atmosphere – the anticipation, the camaraderie between stallholders, the smell of food cooking. Bad weather, though, could often turn the market into an endurance event, especially as we only had a market umbrella to keep the rain off ourselves and the muesli, which we displayed on a cloth-covered door supported by saw horses.

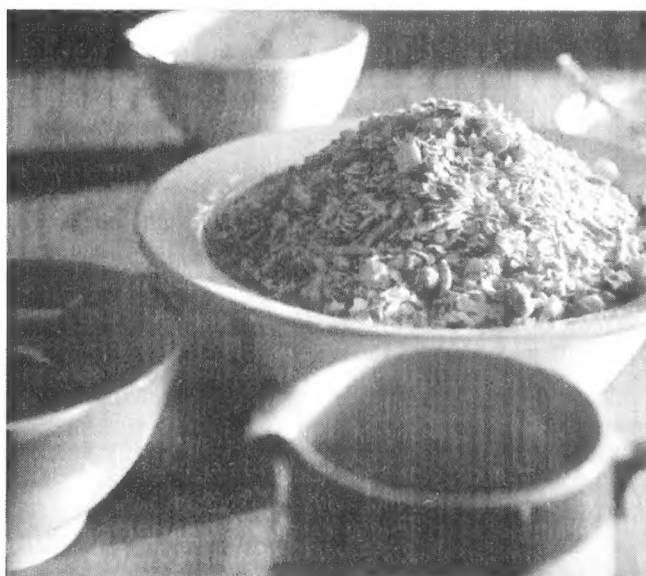
### THINGS GET SERIOUS

My family was tremendously supportive of our enterprise. My brother had

special market aprons, windcheaters and shirts designed with our company name on them and gave them to us for Christmas. My parents delivered muesli to shops in the metropolitan area whenever they could. They never missed the opportunity to introduce their friends to our fare.

The business was developing from a hobby to a more earnest pursuit, almost without our having noticed. Peter asked a graphics teacher and his students to help design a logo. We then arranged for the labels to be professionally printed. Hallelujah! We paid to have our muesli analysed for shelf life (six months), invested in a market tent, and traded in the old ute for the ubiquitous white delivery van. But best of all, we went away for a 10-week European holiday, leaving an obliging friend with enough muesli to supply all our customers during our absence – or so we thought. The muesli actually ran out four weeks after we'd left, but did we care! We were in seventh heaven trailing about the south of France.

Using your own council-approved kitchen for business purposes has its flaws. The more the demand for our muesli increased, the less convenient making it at home became. A review of our muesli in *Gourmet Traveller* magazine prompted orders from around the country. Cooking dinner was often delayed while we struggled to fill those extra orders, and keeping the children out of the kitchen seemed unfair. To





Jodie hand-chops the 'bits'.

build a preparation and storage shed on our own property was the obvious answer, but it seemed such a huge investment.

### TAKING THE PLUNGE

Over the next year or so, Peter spoke to the council about requirements for building such a shed and did the rounds of shed-building companies. Eventually, we took the plunge, borrowed \$50,000 and had one built about 100 metres from the house, in river-gum green so it wouldn't be an eyesore. We fitted it out with a vast conference table, originally from a local hospital, and a stainless steel sink, bench and cupboards my brother no longer needed.

It was great to have space to move. Despite our never advertising the product, health food shops, fitness centres and delis were placing bigger and bigger orders. One trendy Armadale deli advised us to 'tart up' our muesli by putting it in a corrugated cardboard box with a cellophane window instead of a see-through bag, but we didn't. It was, and still is, important to us that people are able to see what they are buying and know that they are paying for the product, not the outer casing. When Ritchie's Supermarkets asked us to supply their stores, we had to make

some adjustments – have barcodes made up, find stronger bags that would withstand rough handling, order pallets of custom-made boxes (instead of using ones we scavenged from the local supermarket) and employ someone part-time to help 'make'.

These were stressful years for Peter. He was finding it hard to manage teaching as well as muesli making. He often finished preparing lessons in the evening only to go to the shed and work until 1am. But he couldn't afford to resign from teaching altogether. It was a real dilemma. The solution? Go on another long holiday to reflect and unwind. This time, we left our new worker in charge and paid someone else to do the deliveries. We phoned each week to help sort out any problems that arose.

Not long after we returned, Peter did resign from teaching. It was a hard decision for him to make, to kiss goodbye a fixed salary, sick leave, long service and holidays, not to mention the staffroom banter and colleagues who had become friends. There was no doubt that he, and in turn all of us, were taking a risk. Only a tiny percentage of small businesses succeed. What if ours didn't? But then again, we'd already survived seven years.

Peter has never regretted that decision. There are still pressures, different ones from teaching, but he likes being his own boss. He likes being able to walk to work and enjoys the simple satisfaction gained from making something and selling it. We both do. His old teaching buddies have trouble believing that he works hard. They seem to think muesli making is something he does when he's not playing golf. He wishes!

### BRIGHT FUTURE

We've now invested in a Powerpak machine that looks like something from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. We have two part-time workers. While we check, chop and weigh the 'bits' (sultanas, apples, nuts etc), Peter puts all the ingredients together, hand-mixes them, then tips them into the machine's chute. The machine then weighs the muesli and deposits the right amount in each bag, which Peter heat-seals. It has sped up the process considerably. But there are other things



The label: bright, simple and effective.

we need if we want to increase our output – a machine that seals as well, a nut roaster (we currently use electric fry-pans to toast the sunflower seeds), a slicing machine to cut the peaches (which we still do by hand and which gives us blisters!), a driver to deliver the muesli (Peter does all the deliveries himself). The question is: how much bigger do we want to get?

The year we began, we sold 900 bags. This year we sold over 40,000 and we supply to 50 retail outlets. Our muesli is being eaten as far away as the Maldives and Hong Kong, and a friend recently took some with her when she travelled to France. We still get a thrill out of knowing how much people enjoy our muesli and meeting some of them face to face at the Red Hill Market. Red Hill is the only market we still go to and we are ably assisted there by both Bonnie, 15, and Oliver, 11. We are not ready to take the next step of buying a factory and a bigger van, employing more staff and paying distributors. We have the lifestyle we want – plenty of time to spend with the children, lovely holidays, job satisfaction and, for me, the chance to pursue my writing career as well.

Jodie and Peter Kewley, Red Hill Muesli Company, ph: 03-5989-2896.

Photos by Marcel Aucar. ☺



# Building Tallowood School

by Jodi Britt, Bowraville, NSW.

Tallowood School is a parent-run primary school on the mid north coast of NSW. In 1985 five families came together with a vision of the education they wanted for their children. The school began with two demountable workers' dorms and now consists of two classrooms and a library, each built in a different and unique style.

## TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The steel-frame demountable buildings, since replaced, were gutted and joined together to form the first classroom. This was done using only a 'cold chisel, a hammer and a box of Band-aids'.

Then the toilets were built from mudbrick. Some of the parents had attended a mudbrick building course and were so excited about their new skills they built a feature archway over the sink. It's definitely a dunny work of art! The school began with these two buildings and is still going strong 20 years later.

## BESSER BLOCK CLASSROOM

The first permanent classroom now serves as the library and kitchen. None



How's this for a loo? One of Tallowood School's first homemade buildings.

of the parents had any building experience at this stage, but they sure ended up with lots. Two of our original fathers became builders!

Broken-faced Besser blocks, with a sandstone component, were chosen as the main building material. They split roughly and have a nice sandy colour,

so look more like stone than Besser block on the outside, but definitely look Bessery on the inside walls.

A qualified tradesman was employed for the brickwork. In order to minimise costs of labour and materials the areas above windows and doors, which are traditionally built using a steel lintel, were left to be done with wooden stud frames. Feather-edged weatherboards were used for the external cladding. When it came time to pitch the roof, two of the fathers took two rafters to a builder and asked him to cut the first pair and give them a quick lesson on roof building. They must have been quick learners because it's still there. They did, however, learn on the job that a 40° roof sounds great in theory but they never want to do it again.

The internal walls were filled with a sawdust and cement mixture. Four-inch nails were half-driven into the studs and noggings to provide grip for the infill, which consisted of 10 percent dampened cement and 90 percent sawdust. A board was tacked across the front and the mix packed down, then the board moved up and another mix



Lindy Walters with the kids' homemade tiles.



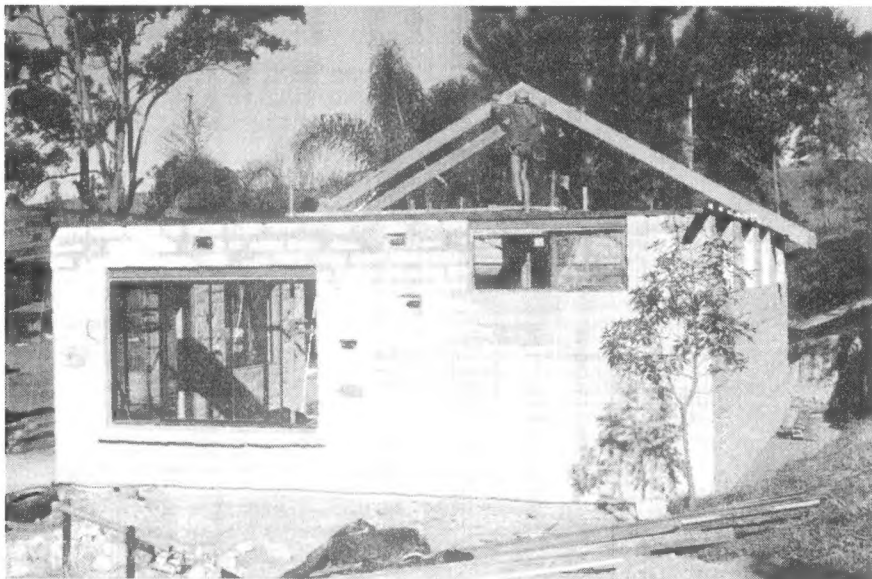
packed in. This needed at least a month to dry to allow for shrinkage before rendering.

The render was a mix of beeswax, mineral turpentine, a chemical hardener and sifted clay. The beeswax had to be melted, and hardened as we worked. A thicker mix was used for the first coat to fill in gaps and then thinner for the final coat. A word of warning – this is a very messy procedure. Don't do it in your kitchen! Also, be very careful with the mineral turpentine, which is extremely flammable.

### MUDBRICK CLASSROOM

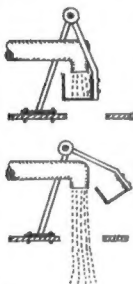
The next classroom to be built was a conventional mudbrick structure, whose very existence was a battle. Initially, the parents who wanted to use mudbrick had to battle the broken-faced Besser block faction, who favoured these for their speed and ease. The mudbrick brigade convinced the majority to at least have a feature wall and then proceeded to produce enough bricks for one wall in two days. The doubters were won over and, with many hands (including the children), all the bricks were made in a week. The children's names on the bricks give a sense of history to the building.

These bricks were made from clay, gravel and cement using a concrete mixer, which mixed eight bricks at a time. Then the council battle began. To satisfy council requirements some sample bricks were sent to CSIRO. The bricks withstood all the required testing, approval was gained and building began. Different coloured glass bottles were incorporated into the walls. The building has a lovely feel and is the



Top: Making mudbricks was a speedier process than many parents expected.  
Bottom: Parents developed new skills, though the steep pitch of the roof was a challenge.

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Rather stylish concrete and mud render loo block, containing composting toilets.

classroom for Kindy to Grade 2.

We did make a slip-up that had to be rectified a few years later. Bond-crete was painted over the outside walls in the expectation that it would improve water resistance. However, the Bond-crete didn't allow the bricks to sweat and 'breathe'; it started to chip off and had to be scrubbed off a few years later. The building was re-rendered with a mud and cow dung mixture.

By this stage the parents had more building experience and opted for a more conventionally pitched roof.

#### CONCRETE AND MUD RENDER

The last building was our big kids' classroom and office. The school was bursting at the seams so we applied for

and received a government grant for a new classroom. Finally, some money to build with! This building was made with a steel frame, chosen for ease of erection (we also had a metalworking dad at the time). The internal walls are Gyprock – the cashed-up builder's best friend. The external walls are a concrete and mud render, the exact recipe for which is more closely guarded than a certain poultry batter's 11 herbs and spices.

The method, however, I will share. The frames are covered with old corrugated iron, which provides a base for the render. Then holes are punched into it and lots of tek-screws half-driven to give a rough surface to grip. The first rough coat contains straw and is a thick mixture that is more daubed on than ren-

## SEE FOR YOURSELF

We are happy to provide more information, but why not come and have a look for yourself? Every year Tallowood hosts a Handmade Houses Tour, which starts at the school. Private homeowners in the area open up their nonconventional houses on 23 and 24 October, 2004. You will be able to see anything from straw bale houses to mud-brick, solar power and much more. Please contact Tallowood School on 02-6564-7619 or Drew Marshall on 02-6564-7512.

An Alternative Lifestyle Expo hosted by Tallowood will also form part of this year's Macksville Pro-Ag held on 8 and 9 October. For more information, or if you want to book a site featuring alternative building techniques and/or materials, please ring Trevor Dawes on 02-6564-8967 or 0427-412-588.

dered. The final coat is a smooth mix containing cement. The finished product is a very smooth mud-looking wall. This method was also used on our disabled toilet block, which was a stipulation by the council. This second toilet block incorporates a composting toilet system.

The children each painted and fired a tile with their own design to be incorporated into the wall. All three of our buildings have features to show the children's involvement. In this way the school buildings themselves form a part of Tallowood's holistic education philosophy. ☘



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# The Unique Red Jungle Fowl

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

The Red jungle fowl is not your average backyard bird, but is one of the most fascinating to keep. It is considered the ancestor of domestic chickens, despite the wide range of shapes, sizes and feather types that purebreds display. Archeological evidence suggests domestication commenced as early as 5400 BC in China and 2000 BC in the Indus Valley. How can researchers be sure just one of the four jungle fowl breeds produced all modern chickens? Comparative studies on the molecular genetics of albumen proteins strongly confirm a sole ancestry from Red jungle fowl. In addition, more recent work with retrovirus sequences points to a closer relationship between domestic and Red jungle fowl than with other jungle fowl breeds.

The four wild jungle fowl breeds are the Grey, Ceylon, Green (or Javan) and the Red. All bear a resemblance to pheasants, which are a close relative. Jungle fowl still exist in a wild state in Southeast Asia, but as agricultural development extends and forests are cleared their habitats are increasingly threatened. They're found in areas as diverse as lowland forests, hilly environs and mountain ranges up to 2000 metres high. Warm temperatures are preferred to cold or chilly climates. Specimens of Red jungle fowl have been in Australia for many decades, initially under the care of pheasant devotees because of the similarity in management needs. At present they're kept by backyarders and collectors alike because they're such a unique and interesting species.

## SUBSPECIES

There are five recognised subspecies of the Red, differentiated by characteristics like ear lobe colour, length and shape of feathers in males' neck hackles, and the shade of red in males' plumage, which varies from golden yellow through to mahogany. The five subspecies are named after their

geographic origination: Cochinese, Burmese, Indian, Javan and Tonkinese. There is general agreement the Indian Red jungle fowl, the Burmese and possibly the Cochinese subspecies are present in Australia.

## CROSSBRED OR AUTHENTIC?

The Australian population of Reds has been infused with domestic fowl and there are two traits to look at to determine genetic status. RD Crawford in *Poultry Breeding and Genetics* advises to look for 'a patch of pale downy



aftershafts at the base of the tail coverts; the patch is very evident during some behavioural displays'. The second distinguishing trait is an annual eclipse moult by males after the breeding season. During this process males grow short rounded dark feathers, lose long tail feathers, and become paler in the face and comb, which also shrinks somewhat in size.

The Australian Red jungle fowl is acknowledged as existing in varying stages of purity and potential owners needn't be put off by this. As experience with the breed develops, networks are established and so guidance on breeding or accessing further specimens is available.

## SUITABILITY FOR GR READERS

We are fortunate in that long-time reader Chris Catt of Windeyer, NSW, has generously shared his knowledge and experience with Red jungle fowl. He readily admits they're quite different from a domestic breed in temperament and behaviour, but lay reasonably and make excellent table birds that carry a hint of gamey flavour.

Chris feels the jungle fowl have more personality than domestic breeds and finds that they are more active and efficient when free ranging. 'They're capable of complete sustainability if enough cover and vegetation are provided.' The best reason for readers to take them on is the satisfaction of knowing they're one of a number of breeders working to protect the breed's purity and so part of an important conservation strategy.

## DESCRIPTION

In appearance the Red jungle fowl is not dissimilar to the Old English Game. They're a light-framed, small fowl, built for speed and activity. Colourwise, there is a resemblance to Brown Leghorns, the male displaying neck hackles of golds and fiery red and a saddle in red and gold-orange shades. The breast is black, as are the tail and underparts. The hen has softer subtler colouring, predominantly fawn and brown-grey with a straw-yellow neck hackle edged with black. Legs and feet for both sexes are bluish slate, eyes orange to red, ear lobes white.

## Temperament

Chris Catt describes his birds as alert, sharp-eyed and having loads of personality. Breeding sets become quite relaxed when they feel secure and are not threatened by the presence of the owner or perhaps the family dog. While they're not normally aggressive to humans, they can feel toey in the breeding season, especially if the owner walks between the hens and the rooster, and the latter may attack due to





Jungle fowls are active, independent, alert birds with loads of personality.

his territorial nature. Never ever run another breed with jungle fowl, there are strong hierarchical positions among the females. The natural protective nature of males precludes more than one male in a pen. It is possible to run several males together, provided they have sufficient free range to run flocks well apart from each other.

#### **Flock Life**

Keep birds in breeding sets of one male and from two to six females. Males engage in lots of courtship behaviour: finding feed morsels and calling the hens, which results in excited scrambling for the offering, and dropping one wing and tippy-toeing around the hen. Both sexes display protective behaviour and will defend young from cats and other small predators, but unfortunately are no match for foxes.

#### **Self-Sufficiency**

Jungle fowl can effectively fend for themselves because of their alert nature and preference for the highest branches if allowed to roost in trees. They will also find much of their food if the range environment has ample tree and shrub cover. If the flock is allowed to run wild, hens will be lost to foxes while setting and in time the whole flock will become shy and very wild and it's doubtful eggs will be found, or that birds will ever be caught.

Clearly, it is best to entice birds into a house at night for safety and to maintain their contact with humans. As well, nest boxes need to be set up in the house or an adjoining covered yard. The hens require a sense of isolation

for laying, so nests should be positioned as far apart as possible. Chris has found that the dominant hen will occasionally attack a setting hen, even injuring her or driving her from the nest, so maximum privacy for each nest box is a must. Naturally, sharing a nest, particularly when broody, can't be allowed because all hens, even domestic ones, squabble over eggs or abandon the setting when the first chick hatches.

Hens lay and set on around 12 eggs. More will be laid if they're removed daily, and the laying season extends from September to March. Incubation takes 21 days. The hen weans the chicks when they're around six weeks and generally commences laying again. Chris recommends separating the hen from the chickens as mothers may become harsh to offspring when they cling and cry.

It's sensible too for hens and newly hatched chicks to be kept separately from the flock. This reduces the risk of disease, but also prevents unnecessary altercations should one of the flock decide to bully the mother and babies. Hens are very good mothers, and may even be used as foster mothers for domestic breeds or other species. A jungle fowl hen can only really cover five goose or turkey eggs at best, so limit numbers.

#### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Keep jungle fowl separate from other fowl you keep and even other species. This will maintain purity and eliminate

territorial fights, most of which are won by jungle fowl.

Young growing cockerels must be kept on their own, for as they approach maturity they will be perceived as a threat and beaten up by the dominant rooster.

You will need to take care too when reintroducing hens that have been setting back into the flock. There is less bullying if you put two birds in at once, always in the evening, so the group wakes up together. Take any hen, even the dominant one, out for two or three days, then reintroduce when you have the former broody ready to be assimilated.

Growing chicks always do better away from adults – they get to eat more freely and any squabbles are evenly matched. Add them in to the adult flock at four to five months in twos or threes.

#### **DEFINITELY DIFFERENT**

Jungle fowl are closer to pheasants in temperament and behaviour than to domestic fowl and are a fascinating bird to keep. Chris Catt is still passionate about them many years after buying his first stock and is keen for GR readers to take them on. He is happy to talk about them and is committed to selling excess birds at very reasonable prices. Alternatively, the Pheasant and Waterfowl Society of Australia may be able to recommend breeders.

Chris Catt, ph: 02-6373-8134, fax 02-6373-8135.

Pheasant and Waterfowl Society of Australia, John Pearce, RMB 'Locksley', Molong, NSW 2866. Ph: 02-6367-7461. ♀

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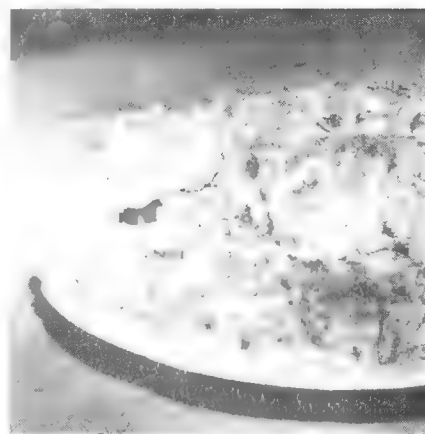
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# Homemade Fast Food

by Theresa Powe, Rochedale South, Qld.

It's not always easy to find time to spend in the kitchen preparing all our foods from scratch as our mothers and grandmothers did. All too often we find ourselves reaching for the quick option of a frozen meal or a just-add-an-egg packet. Apart from being more expensive, processed foods are usually lacking in both taste and nutrients.

Over the years I have developed a collection of easy, time-saving recipes that I can rely on. I hope they will help busy readers cope with those 'What is there to eat?' moments. Of course, substitute ingredients to suit your family's dietary needs. Try half white flour and half wholemeal, in which case you might need to add a little more liquid.



a cool place in the pantry or in the fridge. Use within one month. See suggestions below.

## MOTHER EARTH MUFFINS

This mixture can be either frozen till needed or kept in the fridge for two to three weeks while you take out and cook only the amount you need.

- 6 heaped cups bran
- 1½ cups honey
- 5 tsp baking powder
- 5 cups plain flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup oil
- 1.2 lt buttermilk

Mix all ingredients well. Spoon into greased muffin tin till sections are  $\frac{2}{3}$  full. Bake in moderate oven for 15 to 25 minutes, till tops are slightly brown and a skewer comes out clean.

## QUICKIE MIX

Use this base to make biscuits, muffins, pancakes, cakes or bread.

- 8 cups SR flour
- 3 cups powdered nonfat milk
- 1 tbsp salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 cups vegetable shortening or 1½ cups vegetable oil

Sift dry ingredients together, then cut in shortening or oil. Mix with pastry blender or fingers till you have a crumbly consistency. Makes 11 cups. Store in a tightly covered container in

## BISCUITS WITH QUICKIE MIX

Preheat oven to very hot. Gradually mix  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water to 2 cups quickie mix. Use just enough water to make a dough that is soft but not sticky.

Turn dough out and knead about 12 times on a lightly floured surface. Roll out to 12 to 19 mm thickness. Cut with a floured glass or cutter. Place on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 10 to 15 minutes. Makes about 12 biscuits.

## MUFFINS WITH QUICKIE MIX

Preheat oven to hot. Mix 2 cups quickie mix with 2 tbsp sugar. Beat one egg into  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water. Add to quickie mix. Barely stir, batter should be lumpy for tender muffins. Spoon into muffin tin, filling sections to  $\frac{2}{3}$ . Bake 15 to 20 minutes. Makes 12.

## EASY PASTRY MIX

- 500 g plain flour
- 500 g SR flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- 500 g margarine or butter

Mix all ingredients till mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Keep in fridge in a sealed bowl till ready to use. Before using mix to a dough with water, adding a little sugar or honey for sweet pastry. ☺

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CGR0904



# Backyard Cotton Growing

by Nevin Sweeney, St Clair, NSW.

**Intrepid Nevin set out to investigate whether it was possible to grow his own cotton clothing in his suburban Sydney backyard. Here's what he discovered.**

I am interested in processes, how things are made from start to finish, like growing the wheat to grind to make flour to bake the bread. I suppose that is where this idea originated. Being your average city slicker, I had never seen cotton growing, except in those old movies set in the deep American South. I did know that we produced a fair bit of cotton here in Australia. Having worn cotton undies for years, I assumed that gave me a unique insight into the growing of the raw material. Well, perhaps not, but knowing nothing about cotton cultivation I was ready to give it a go!

The first challenge was where on earth to get hold of cotton seeds. They seem to be notably absent from all of those organically grown and open-pollinated seed catalogues. A couple of years ago I was lucky enough to come across a stand at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in one of the agricultural pavilions. There was a big container of cotton seeds (and a couple of sorry specimens growing as examples) and I quite cheerfully pocketed half a handful. Otherwise, it might be worth contacting a produce merchant by posing as a wealthy landowner and asking for samples, otherwise be honest and slip them a couple of dollars for a hundred grams of seeds.

If you own half of Queensland and wish to grow three billion hectares of cotton, there are a number of texts that will tell you how, what the sowing rate is, and what fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides to use to get the most out of your crop. The *Manual of Australian Agriculture*, edited by RL Reid, is one such, but it did also provide a bit of background information. Try asking someone from mainstream agriculture about small-scale or organic cotton growing and you'll hear: 'Are you having a lend of me or what?'

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAID

Thus began my search to get a bit of info on how to turn my seeds into a tuxedo. I came across a helpful book: Rim Buchanan's *A Weaver's Garden*, an American book that was not overflowing with data, but at least it took the concept of small-scale cotton seriously. Rim Buchanan talks about how to grow upland cotton. There are a number of varieties of cotton, but if *Manual of Aussie Agriculture* says that upland is the only type we grow in Australia, I took it as a broad hint that

the seeds I had were of that variety. The author's comments are that:

- you need a long hot growing season,
- full sun is essential,
- plant the seeds where they will grow (as opposed to raising them to seedling stage, then planting out),
- you need a patch about six metres square to get enough cotton for a blouse.

## WHAT I FOUND IN PRACTICE

In typical fashion, reality did not quite meet up with theory.

- I live in Sydney, which is considered temperate, and the cotton grows okay in my garden.

- I was very reluctant to give over space in the vegie garden to growing a fibre crop, so I stuck two plants in amongst my herbs near the house in the front garden where they get full morning sun but afternoon shade. That was last year; this year I installed a couple of plants right next to the house, but they didn't do so well, though the plants in the original spot are growing like a ripper!

- I have started all my cotton plants in punnets in my small plastic house and they seem to transplant without problems.

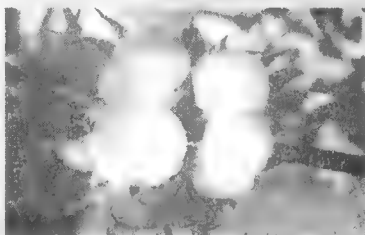
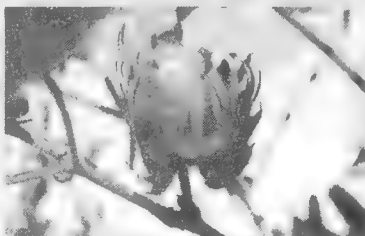
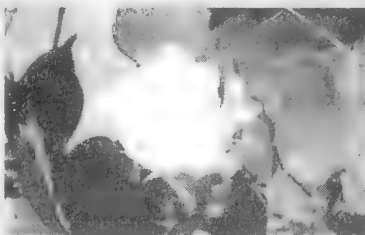
- From the original two plants I harvested a shopping bag full of cotton bolls, so I think the author is being a bit pessimistic here. Mind you, this is yet to be spun up into yarn!

## PREPARATION AND CARE

Having chosen the only area in which I could fit in a couple of spare plants, I dug it over and incorporated some poultry and horse poo to make 'em grow. Apart from watering the plants every few days, they did not need much care, in contrast with the commercial stuff.

A friend of my brother's has grown cotton and reckons that all it takes is a

## THREE STAGES OF COTTON



Top: The attractive cotton flower.  
Middle: The immature boll.  
Bottom: Open ready for harvesting.

bit of a mark on an immature boll to prevent the cotton from forming, so they spray the living daylight out of the plants. So far the only pest to show interest in my cotton has been snails, and they go for the leaves and not the bolls – so much for the dreaded boll weevil! When grown as part of mainstream agriculture, though, due to their sensitivity and not being a food crop, they are one of the most heavily sprayed crops, but that, I suppose, is the price of monoculture.

The plants were in for about six to eight weeks before they started to flower, and what flowers! My ability to describe flowers is not the best, but the cotton plants produce a progression of yellow-, white- or purple-tipped whorls about five centimetres long and about the same in circumference when fully open. To my mind the plant is worth growing for its flowers, let alone the fibre it produces.

## HARVEST AND STORAGE

Once the flowers are fertilised (they seem to be self-fertile or at least I haven't seen any insects take interest in them), the petals fall off and the boll grows over a few weeks and then bursts to give the familiar cotton wool ball appearance over a day or two. The flowers open and then form bolls continuously up until the frosts kill the plants. This staggered harvest caused me no problems, I just picked them every week or so, but it must really irritate the commercial growers, who, I am sure, would rather have one big harvest.

After the opened bolls were picked I stored them on a board in my garage to keep them dry until processing. If a boll is freshly opened and the cotton hasn't had a chance to puff out, any water from irrigation or rain will cause the cotton to stay compressed in the boll and not expand out, so pick any open bolls if you can before rain is expected. If this happens, the cotton cannot be spun directly from the boll, but must be removed from the boll and carded prior to spinning (see processing).

## PROCESSING

The bolls were fun to play with, but I wanted make fabric out of them. I did some research and found out that cotton



Nevin found cotton grew well, making it a useful and decorative garden addition.

is spun the same way as wool, although it is a bit more difficult due to the smoother fibre and lack of crimp, so a faster speed is used when spinning.

Prior to being spun the cotton needed to have the seeds removed and then be carded to get all of the fibres lying in the one direction ready for spinning. This was all very well in theory, but it was soon made abundantly clear to me why cotton spinning remained a cottage craft up until the invention of the cotton gin. There were plenty of seeds distributed through the boll and they were stuck like the proverbial! Just the sort of job you want after a hard day in the salt mines – sitting in front of the TV picking the seeds out of your cotton.

I had decided to make my own spinning wheel to process the cotton, having been given a wood lathe and also having accumulated a number of plans over the years. This takes considerable time and effort, so is still on the drawing board. One day we saw a complete spinning wheel in good nick in an antique shop for \$120 (new they can fetch \$500 – \$600), so we thought, 'what the hell?' and gave the credit card a caning (again). Our wheel is of indeterminate breed, but has a dual drive band, which I was informed by the lady who knows about such things is the hardest to learn on. It is a nice looking piece of furniture though and is particularly suitable for spinning cotton.

## Spinning

I learnt to spin using wool, which is

easier to learn on. This took about three or four weeks of Thursday night classes and some weekend practice before I was producing a nice, free thread instead of six-millimetre-thick ropes. My instructor knew that I wanted to learn to spin cotton and showed me how it was possible to spin direct from the boll without removing all of the seeds and without carding. This looked mighty impressive when she first showed me, but what surprised the living daylight out of me was that once I could spin the wool effectively, I found that I could do it too! The trick is to keep hold of the seed and spin the cotton off from around it, so you are left holding the seed, then start off the next boll, and so on.

It is still quite time consuming to spin this way, so if you have the right gear it might also be worth considering processing the cotton further before spinning.

## Carding

My instructor obtained a second-hand pair of carders for me and taught me how to use them. The trick is to apply the cotton to only half of the first carder and then stroke the second carder across the first to align the fibres; if the carders get stuck together, you are going too deep. The second bit of kit, a cotton gin, is less easy to come by, so the options are:

- get one from the States via the net for several hundred dollars,
- make one,
- go back to pulling out the seeds while watching the tube.

## FOR MY NEXT TRICK . . .

My next project is to design and build a small-scale cotton gin – I'll keep you informed.

My job now is to grow enough cotton and then spin it into thread and ply it and wind it into skeins so that I will have sufficient cotton thread to weave into cloth, from which I will make a garment of some description, or at least a nice cotton hanky! It is fascinating to be part of a craft that goes back for such a long time, and you also get some idea of what work was required to produce clothing before the industrial revolution. I now understand why most people before that time only had one or two sets of clothing. ☺

# Cleaning With Herbs

by Lillian Barry, Glenorie, NSW.



Spring is the traditional time for cleaning our homes after we've been closeted inside all winter. Though this might seem a mammoth job requiring the purchase of numerous cleaning agents, there are simple and effective cleaners that can be made up using items from the pantry and a few readily available herbs. Expensive one-purpose cleaners are not always necessary.

The thought of using homemade cleaners might conjure up vague stories of Elizabethan housekeepers strewing bunches of hyssop, wormwood or lavender over pressed earth floors or underneath rugs to 'sanitise' and fumigate their homes; or maybe romantic notions of a well-to-do lady overseeing her still room, where fresh herbs and flowers were brought in from a well-tended garden and used to create scented waters for freshening linens and clothing. These images are inappropriate to today's lifestyle. We are fortunate now that we have the choice of making our own cleaners, buying commercial products or a combination of both. For heavy duty cleaning, given today's time constraints, a commercial product might be the preferred option for many.

However, we can temper this by choosing to use more environmentally kind cleaners on an everyday basis.

## SURFACE CLEANERS

A cleaner for bench tops, tile floors, windows and other hard surfaces can be cheaply and easily made using household vinegar. Unfortunately, this has a very recognisable odour that could have us confusing the bathroom with the kitchen! To overcome this, place bunches of your favourite aromatic herb into a large glass jar, fill with vinegar, cover and allow to sit on a sunny windowsill for several days. Lavender, rose geranium leaves, lemon verbena, or a combination of all three are fragrant enough to add a pleasing perfume to your cleaner. Strain off the herbs and use the fragrant vinegar for cleaning. Place into a spray bottle for ease of use. For cleaning windows, dilute the cleaner with warm water (about half and half).

A homemade furniture polish can be made quite easily and, as large quantities are not needed, is economical to make. Combine equal quantities of linseed oil and malt vinegar, add several drops of lavender oil or another fragrant oil. An alternative method is to steep fresh bunches of your favourite herb in the malt vinegar, strain and mix with the linseed oil.

Fresh sorrel leaves are reputed to be effective for polishing copper and lemon balm leaves to be an effective polish for wooden furniture, with the added benefit of keeping the furniture insect free.

## PERFUMED HERBS

Sweet waters can be quickly brewed for perfuming clothes in the last rinse cycle of the washing machine. Place generous handfuls of fragrant rose petals, lavender flowers, lemon balm, rosemary or

another favourite herb into a stainless steel or enamelled saucepan, cover with water and simmer for ten minutes. Remove from heat, cool and strain. Add a dash or two of alcohol to the mixture to act as a preserving agent. Two or three tablespoons of this mixture added to the final rinse will perfume your bath towels, linens or lingerie and help keep insects at bay as well.

Traditionally, herbs with camphor-like perfumes, such as santolina, southernwood and wormwood, were dried and used in sachets to prevent moths attacking linens. Though these herbs are usually effective, they don't impart a particularly pleasant fragrance to the linen closet. Herbs such as rosemary and lavender can be added to the mix, increasing the insecticidal benefits and providing a more acceptable fragrance. Dried pyrethrum flowers can also be added to the mix to increase the insect repellent qualities.

## DRYING HERBS

The simplest way to dry herbs is to pick them in bunches, wrap elastic bands around the stems and hang upside down to dry. This can look very pretty and impart a country feel if hung to dry in the kitchen. A dry, airy place is best for quick drying. Once all the herbs have been thoroughly dried, crumble them into homemade cotton fabric sachets. These can be tied with ribbon and placed in linen closets and dresser drawers, hung from coathangers in the wardrobe, or even stuffed into shoes. If sewing is not your thing, place a handful of the dried herbs into the centre of pretty cotton handkerchiefs and tie with ribbon. These are quick and very easy to make.

Next time you feel a cleaning frenzy coming on, pick some herbs and enjoy the experience. ☘



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# The City Slicker's Guide To Country Camouflage

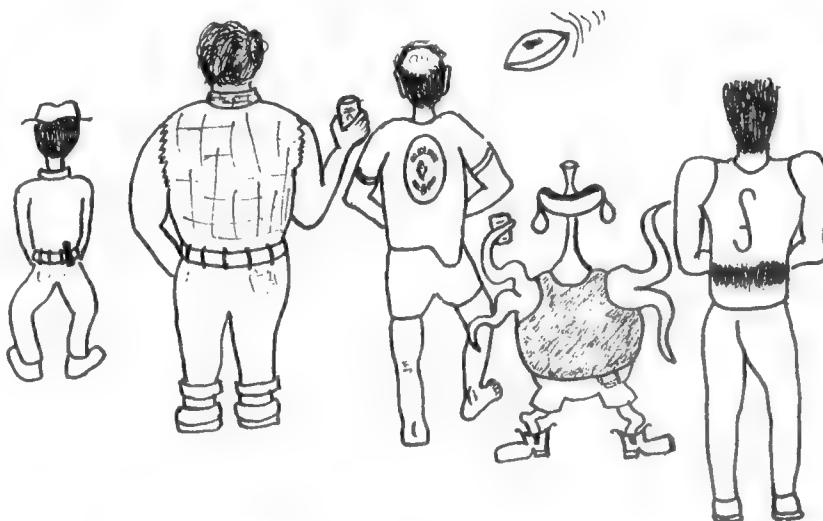
by Steve Fitzgerald, Upper Mongogarie, NSW.

Several issues ago I introduced you to real estate speak. If you've been brave enough to actually buy a property, this light-hearted look at fitting in to the new community is essential reading.

The pair had just arrived in the small village. After a long journey from Sydney, car parked in the wide main street, they happily glanced about their new home. They'd been assigned to work in the local school when this vacation was over and had booked into the pub for a couple of nights, intending to unobtrusively survey their new habitat before assuming professional duties in some weeks time. Coming from the comfortable anonymity of the inner city they'd presumed a couple of strangers staying briefly in town wouldn't attract undue attention. Saint Snafu, the patron saint of innocents, smiled benignly down upon them.

Two new and obviously thirsty customers soon attracted the publican's attention. Returning with amply full glasses of chilled elixir, mine host also presented them with a surprise. 'G'day, you must be the new school teachers, I'm Martin Fitzpatrick and this is my brother Kev. Bill, come over and meet the new teachers. Al, over here. George, say hello to . . .'

City-bred paranoia jangled through their brains. There went any hopes for future employment as secret agents for ASIO or MI5 for a start. Was Martin a mind reader? Nope, the answer later became obvious: country folk tend to be more observant than their city cousins. Their livelihood can depend on carefully noting small changes in animal health, pasture conditions and the weather. To the experienced eye our two new arrivals stood out like a pair of Venusians at a meeting of the Flat Earth Society. You might think that the above story is exaggerated, but you should know me better than that; it's true, and guess who it happened to!



Blending in with the locals at the footy.

With the hindsight of numerous years of rural living, here are a few tips that might help an ex-city slicker who has just moved to the bush and is still 'green'. Country folk tend to be more casually (and less expensively) dressed than their metropolitan counterparts. Select your new wardrobe from De Paul's Boutique or other op shops. The array of garments in regional second-hand clothing stores should also give you some idea as to what the locals would (possibly) wear. Not to say the total skin-tight black leather look, with a large capital A in a circle painted on the back won't be acceptable, but it would be best if the locals got to know you first. They'll probably still think you're excessively proud of the grades you attained at school. Of course, if you want your social status (and income) to be obvious, R M Williams or Country Road gear may be more your style. People dressed in this clobber who expect to be treated with the proper deference by shopkeepers and other tradesfolk may well receive it, and be charged accordingly.

If you can't afford an old four-wheel-drive or ute, you may also wish

to disguise the origins of your vehicle. Some strategically placed splats of mud and a few stone bullseyes on the windscreen should help. In times of drought, a fine layer of (local) dust over all interior surfaces may be advisable. As a last ingredient for your camouflage, memorising local weather patterns, especially the rainfall figures for the last 50 years, would be an invaluable aid to conversation.

Next time, some invaluable advice about local characters. ☘

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# Furnishing A Cat Enclosure

by Cameron Heap, Greensborough, Vic.

An empty room is all you really need to live in, but both humans and cats feel 100 percent better if it is furnished and decorated properly. Most cats are quite willing to allow their owners to spend a considerable amount of money furnishing a cat enclosure; it is up to you to impose a budget on them. There are a number of areas that should be considered when furnishing and decorating an environment for your cat, and, like most things, solutions range from fairly cheap to quite expensive.

As with any human room, over time you will need to change and replace the furnishings in your cat's room. Some items will be loved to death; other items plain destroyed just because your cat felt like it, and some items may never be used (usually the most expensive or difficult to obtain). Keep in mind most cat furnishings do have a limited life span and probably won't outlast your cat.

Remember, your cat is an individual. The information below contains my suggestions, but you will need to discuss them fully with your cat and give them a try to see what works.

## EXISTING FURNISHINGS

Many cat enclosures do not start off completely empty.

### Plants

If there are existing plants that you have ascertained are cat safe, these should be encouraged to remain and grow. Convincing your cat of this may be harder. Many see it as a personal challenge to remove every single leaf off a plant every time it grows new ones. If the plant can be encouraged to grow through the wall or roof of the enclosure, it will have a much better chance of staying alive due to part of it being cat proof. Many cats will also try to dig up their plants. Consider putting some rocks or timber around the bases. If a plant has a stem that the cat likes climbing, it might be worth staking if the cat is wobbling or bending it too much. If



Cats love shelf seats high on fences.

the cat is constantly sharpening its claws on the trunk of a tree, it could eventually ringbark it; protect one side with a scratching post or timber.

Most plants in a cat enclosure need to be considered as short term, so don't plant anything with sentimental value here. You might need to install temporary guards around plants to help them establish, then periodically to recover from cat damage. Consider having a couple of sets of plants in pots and rotating them in and out of the enclosure to give them a cat-free break every month. Or plant the plants outside the enclosure and encourage branches to grow into it, or climbers to grow over part of the enclosure. Make sure that you are not removing all the sunlight with the plantings. Visit the Pet Solutions website ([www.petsolutions.com.au](http://www.petsolutions.com.au)) for information on plants and cats.

### Window Treatments

If the enclosure is attached to the house, it is quite likely to have windows looking into the cat enclosure. If the window has a flyscreen, the cat is likely to hang off it (Garfield style) whenever you are doing anything interesting in that room. This will destroy nylon flyscreen over time, which will need to be replaced with metal flyscreen. Some windows have awnings or blinds. Check that they are child safe and they should be okay for the cat (eg: that they can't hang themselves on

the cord or become entangled and that they won't hurt themselves if they start chewing or climbing on it). You might need to acknowledge that the window covering now has a limited life span.

### Treated Pine

Modern treated pine is regarded by the timber industry as being safe (if chewed by the cat), but older treated pine could pose a problem. If in doubt check with your timber supplier or vet.

### Hot Water Heater

If your enclosure contains the hot water heater, most cats will consider it an ideal napping position. You might need to install a ramp to enable them to get up or down. Most are very happy to sleep straight on top of the heater. If you want to add bedding to the top of the heater, make sure that it will not be damaged by heat, and that it doesn't cut out most of the heat to your cat as this is the primary reason they choose to sleep here. One of our cats still insists on sleeping on the hot water heater even when the temperature is over 35° C.

## ADD-ON FURNISHINGS

### Aerial Furniture

There is a very large difference between a human room and a cat room. We tend to have only one level; all our chairs, tables and beds are on the floor. Cats do not have this disadvantage and can have as many levels as they want. It may be as simple as shelving attached to the wall or the fence (wide enough for them to stretch or roll over on). You can also hang shelves or walkways (planks) from the roof supports with chain. These will sway gently in the wind. There are also a range of hammocks, swings and hanging beds that can be purchased or made for your cat. These should be placed at various heights and positions around the enclosure.

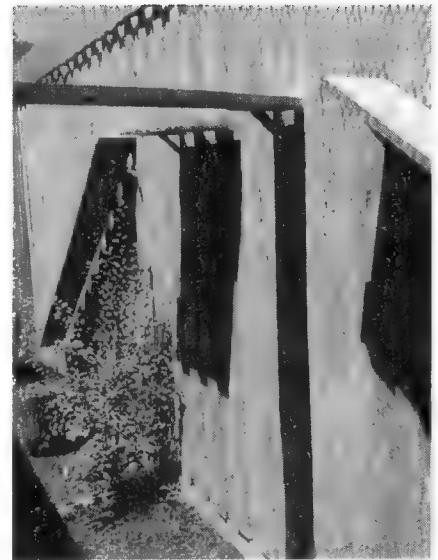
Cats love to be up high and appreciate shelving near the top of the enclosure (especially if it means they can see into next door's backyard). They would also like a shelf, or succession of them,



This play cottage also provides shade.



Secured logs make fun climbers.



Cat walkways require different levels.

which will enable them to stay sleeping in the sun all day long. Naturally, they will also want some that are in the shade for when it is too hot. Shelving that is undercover, but enables them to look out at rain is also popular with some cats.

To reach the shelves your cat might need assistance. Most cats, unless old or disabled, should be able to easily jump half a metre either vertically or horizontally, some considerably more. You can provide ramps or poles for them to access the various levels of their room. They should not need cleats on timber ramps; they are quite capable of climbing steep ramps without steps. You should consider ending the ramps before the shelving, forcing your cat to jump. It should need to do some exercise to get to a place for taking a nap, else it can become an unfit overweight animal.

Ropes are also popular, either hanging straight down, or looped Tarzan style between items. You need to consider how the cat is likely to use it to determine thickness and how tightly you will string it (also consider humans walking through the enclosure and strangling themselves). Natural fibres are preferred by cats to synthetic, but might not last as long in the weather. You can buy special cat ropes, or make your own with ordinary hemp rope plaited.

#### **Floor Furniture**

Items to put on the floor of the enclosure are only limited by your

imagination and wallet. There are numerous 'adventure parks' available. If purchasing one of these, consider if the base material is weatherproof and if the external carpet is exterior grade. Make sure that any exposed timber is protected. There are a range of timber bunk beds, which are a bit like cat kennels; again, check they are suitable for outside. Heat pads are available, but are expensive if suitable for outside use, and are not normally necessary unless your cat has special needs.

A pillow-type bed on the floor is often a cheap and popular item with cats. General landscaping items can be used to create interest. For example, logs lying on the floor, at an angle to a wall, or set vertically to climb on and run up and down. Or a pile of landscaping rocks to hide behind. A group of pavers that can absorb the sun's heat makes a good basking spot. Even something as simple as a wheelbarrow can provide lots of fun to a cat to hide in and jump out at its flat mate. Any outdoor human furniture is normally quite acceptable to cats as well.

Some cats will immediately start using new items the second they are put in the enclosure, others will totally ignore something, usually until the day you go to remove it again, when they will suddenly decide that it is vital to their decor. Some items will be used every day for a month, and then never looked at again; others are

only occasionally used, or only used if everything else is already occupied. These are simply the joys of owning an individual cat.

#### **Manicure Sets**

Most cats will want to manicure their nails. Either you can provide them with something, or they will select something, normally something expensive, with sentimental value and easily destroyed. A scratching post is the simplest solution and, as with floor furniture, the range is very wide, but should be checked that it is suitable for outdoor use. It should be fixed so it can't fall over, but this does not necessarily mean fixed so it doesn't move. We have a hollow scratching post that we have slipped over a star post. There is no danger of it falling when a cat is on it, but it rotates, making them work hard and have to concentrate.

Posts do not have to be vertical, they can be angled, or lie flat on the floor or horizontally in the air. Alternatively, you can simply attach a patch of external carpet to something already in the enclosure, the wall, fence, their bed or a concrete floor. If they are using a tree trunk, attaching carpet to one side will protect the tree from being ringbarked. Natural logs with the bark attached are also popular for scratching. If there are timber beams or supports, your cat may decide to use these for its nails. Discourage them from using flywire unless you



fancy replacing it every month or so (a spray bottle of water is quite good for getting your point across).

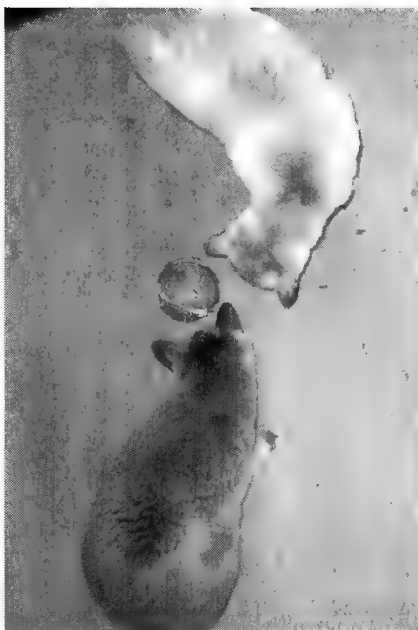
#### Water Bowls And Sprays

If your cat is ever locked outside in the enclosure, it must have water available. It is safest to install an automatic water bowl (one that fills from a tap if it falls below a certain level). If your cat has free access into the house and its water bowl, water is not necessary in the enclosure, but would be appreciated. It is not so important to have the bowl fill automatically if they have water in the house. Make sure that the bowl remains clean and that the water is fresh.

Some cats enjoy a misting system attached to the roof in summer (simple irrigation components from any hardware store). The misted water is too fine to be like rain, but it lowers the temperature of the enclosure during summer. (Be aware of water restrictions.) If you have plants in the enclosure you will need to water them, which some cats will loudly object to – just hard luck; they will have to learn to put up with it or go inside while you are watering.

#### Shade

There must be shade in the enclosure if the cat cannot retreat to the house. Furniture (such as a cat kennel), shadecloth on the roof, solid roofing or plants can all be used to provide shade. It is quite good if the shade moves during the day, as this will make the cat move around too. Ideally, the enclosure would never be fully in shade or fully in the sun. Consider different levels, the top shelves may be in sun and the floor in shade. This gives the cat the ability to select what it feels like each day.



Ball stalking is a wildlife-friendly pastime.

#### Cat TV

When you are comfortably reclining in your favourite chair, you will often wish to be entertained by the TV. Naturally, cats are the same. A shelf where they can see what the neighbours are doing or out into the street can provide plenty of entertainment. Our cat's favourite TV channel is 'birdbath'. Consider installing a birdbath just outside the enclosure. The birds will get used to it in a short time and soon realise that your cat is all 'meow' and no bite.

Many enclosure cats are able to extend their territory past the walls of their enclosure. They will still own the part of your backyard that they can see, even if they can't get to it. This can give them the ability to 'protect' the

birdbath from free-roaming cats, so next to the enclosure could in fact be a safe place to locate a bath. Similarly, if you feed birds, do it in a place that your cat can watch. Do be aware, however, that this can reduce birds' fear of free-ranging cats elsewhere and thus make them easier prey. Many cats will become mesmerised looking at a running water feature so, if you have one, give them a viewing shelf to watch it from. Any place children play, or entertainment areas, will give the cat something else to watch too.

#### Multi-Cat Enclosures

This is rather like having a multi-child environment. Each will want something the other has, now. They may have ignored a particular shelf for the last month, but must sleep on it now simply because someone else is there. Make sure there is plenty of furniture and shelving available so one cat is not genuinely prevented from having somewhere comfortable to sit. Some cats will tend to dominate the 'TV' and become couch potatoes. You can provide more 'TV chairs' for the other cats, or make the existing viewing place less comfortable (perhaps put a shelf on an angle rather than horizontal, making them move every hour or two).

It is a good idea to have something relatively solid in the centre of the enclosure that they can chase each other around (this reduces their need to do it round the lounge suite). A vertical panel of lattice can be quite effective, giving them something to run around, set up ambushes and reach through to trip the other cat. Be wary of having two access points to the enclosure. If they can do a circuit from one access point, through the cage, out the other, through the house and back to the first, you will have a full racetrack through your house. It is pointless to put furniture where this racetrack runs, and can be dangerous walking across it. If this happens, you need to restrict access in such a way as there is no complete circuit that they can run around.

Most of all, remember to use your imagination and have fun furnishing your cat's enclosure.

Contact Cameron Heap at Pet Solutions for more information on pet enclosures and furnishings: [www.petsolutions.com.au](http://www.petsolutions.com.au)

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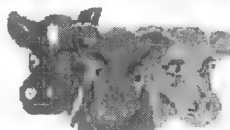
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# Harvesting Your Lawn

by Nevin Sweeney, St Clair, NSW.

mower so that you can collect the grass clippings for use.

## ADVANTAGES

The advantages of the push mower are many.

- A push mower costs one-third or less of the price of a new petrol mower.

- There are no petrol, oil, spark plugs or tune-ups to pay for. I calculated, based on fuel and oil costs, that the pay-back period for a

push mower was about three years.

- There's no environmental damage as is caused by petrol exhaust fumes.

- A push mower is safer because it can't shoot out sticks, stones or other debris to cause injury to personnel or innocent window panes. It also can't lop off unsuspecting fingers.

- It's good for your sanity – have you ever tried to start a motor mower that just didn't want to start?

- You, as the mower power plant, get some exercise.

- The mower blades are self-sharpening, all you need to do is adjust the clearance between the blades and the cutter bar every so often, so little ongoing maintenance is required.

## DISADVANTAGES

As with all things, there are some disadvantages to the push mower.

- Push mowers are not designed for uneven ground or very long grass.

- If the grass is very thick the mower gets somewhat hard to push.

- There can be no more excuses for not doing the lawn, such as 'there's no petrol!'

- While the mower does not spit out sticks, stones and other debris at a great

rate of knots, they do bring the operation to a screaming halt when you hit them and then you have to go around and remove the offending obstruction before continuing.

- Due to the design of the mower, it can't cut right up to objects and it helps to have a pair of hedge shears or a whipper-snipper to tidy up the fiddly bits.

## OPERATING TIPS

In my experience, the following ideas help the operation of a push mower.

- If the mower is getting hard to push or is not cutting as well as it should, it is time to adjust the distance between the rotating blades and the cutter bar up again. This seems to need doing about every six months of moderate usage (one to two lawn cuts per week).

- For very heavy grass you may need to take two cuts – either raise the cutter bar to take a coarse cut then lower it back down to take a finer cut; or only mow half the blade width on each swathe, so that the area is covered by two overlapping cuts.

If you are like me and stuck in suburbia waiting to make the break, you'll probably find a new-style push mower to be a worthwhile investment. ☺

Bill Mollison of permaculture fame refers to the suburban lawn as a 'green cancer' because of its lack of productivity and the amount of resources required to maintain it. I can't help but agree, but, having been a prisoner of suburbia for many years, I also understand that to keep the peace (especially with my partner in self-sufficiency) a certain amount of lawn is required. So for years I have been harvesting my lawn and using the cuttings to make mulch and compost. Up until 12 months ago I used the conventional petrol-powered motor mower to gather in the harvest, but I have now invested in a push mower.

I can still remember the type of push mower my father and our neighbours used back in the 1960s – big cast iron and steel things that seemed to be lubricated with gravel. They took a fair amount of effort to use and it is no wonder the motor mower took over. Nowadays, there are much lighter and more efficient models available; they do not take any more effort to push than a motor mower and they consume no fossil fuels. The brand that I have is Flymo, but I have seen others. You do need to buy a catcher with the push

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# What To Do With A Doily

by Jose Robinson, Noosa Waters, Qld.

**Surely you have a few doilies tucked away in a cupboard? These lovingly crafted items may no longer go with the decor, but they still have a multitude of uses.**

What do you do with old doilies? Most ladies my age, and quite a few younger ones too, would have a collection of hand-embroidered and crocheted doilies, which they lovingly created when they were teenagers for their 'hope chests' or 'glory boxes'. For several centuries it was the done thing to use doilies as centrepieces on tables, side tables, shelves and mantlepieces. Bowls of flowers, ornaments and photographs stood proudly on these embroidered or lacy works of art.

The linen doilies would be regularly laundered, starched and ironed and stored in linen cupboards, ready to be rotated with those in use on every flat surface. As a child, one of my jobs was to iron the handkerchiefs and doilies.

Doilies have long since gone out of fashion, but they've always seemed too good, or been associated with too many fond memories, to turf out or send to the op shop. So for years these memorabilia have lain in my cupboards, yellowing with age, and perhaps, eventually, some have been thrown out. These days the only doily in general use is the disposable paper kind used for serving cakes on.

## COAT HANGER COVERS

When rearranging my linen cupboard recently, I uncovered about 20 pretty doilies and had a brainstorm of how to make use of them in my current situation. Over a period of a few days, I turned the lot into coat hanger covers.

I collected a selection of plain wooden hangers from my wardrobes and padded them with whatever I could find. I then covered them with the said doilies.

### Large Doilies

Some of the larger table centres were big enough to cover one hanger. Here's how it's done.

- Extract the hook and fold the doily over the hanger lengthwise so the crocheted edges hang down front and back.
- Using a zigzag (or plain) stitch on the sewing machine, sew once across, either at the crocheted edge or closer to the hanger.
- Make a small hole in the centre of the doily to screw the hook back in place.
- Sew a couple of hand-stitches at each end of the covered hanger to keep the cover firmly in place
- Tie a pretty ribbon in a bow at the base of the hook to finish the job.

## Small Doilies

If you have smaller round doilies, use two for each hanger. Ideally, they should be a matching pair, but this is not crucial, however, they should be the same size.

- Fold and stitch the doilies as above, but on each side of the hook, without removing hook.

- Lash and tie the two doilies together with ribbon to secure them.

## Crocheted Doilies

Crocheted doilies, which, of course, are mostly see-through, can be used in the same manner, but look better if the hanger is covered with a piece of satin or similar fabric first.

## CUSHION COVERS

Doilies can be joined together to make a cushion cover. Anyone with a sewing machine and a little imagination can come up with lots of combinations to make useful, washable cushion covers.

- A larger round doily could make the centrepiece of a round cushion with gathered fabric around the outside edge to meet up with a second round doily on the reverse side of the cushion.

## SACHETS

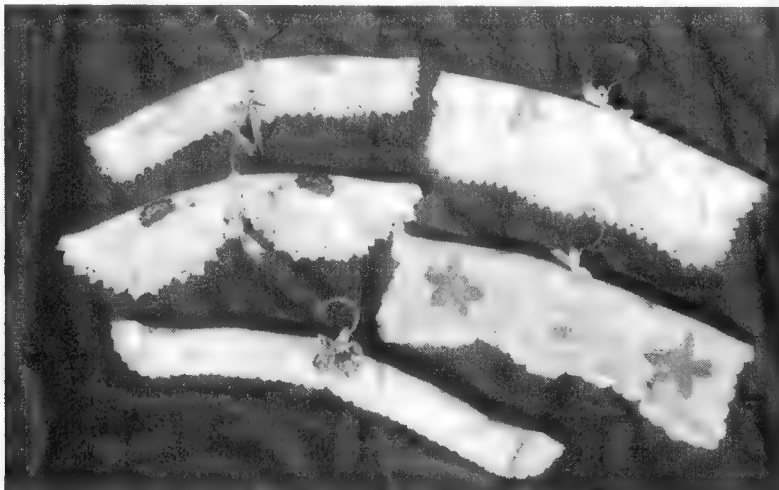
To make a potpourri sachet:

- Fold over and stitch up the sides of a doily.
- Fill with potpourri and tie up the top with pretty ribbon and a bow.

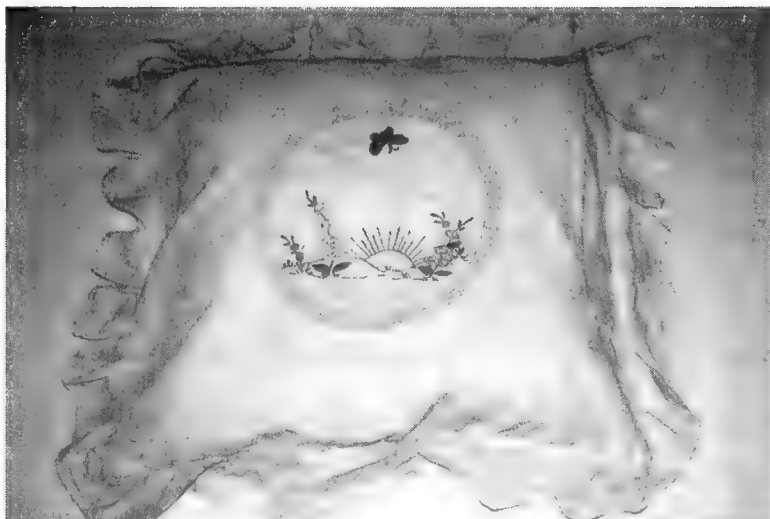
## DOLL'S SKIRT AND TOP

You can make a glamorous doll's skirt.

- Fold a doily in half and cut a small circle in the centre.
- Place the doll through the hole and gather up fabric to fit the waist.
- A ribbon belt completes the skirt.
- Make a top for the doll's outfit the same way, but the hole becomes a head hole.
- Stitch up the sides.







### **EVENING BAG**

A small evening bag is another useful item that can be made from a suitable doily.

- Thread a cord through the perimeter of a crocheted doily and simply draw up and tie.
- If the spaces in the crochet pattern are too open, add a lining fabric cut to the same size.

### **CAMPBOR BAGS**

If you like to place camphor or lavender amongst your stored winter blankets and jumpers, make bags from small doilies to contain the camphor blocks or dried lavender flowers.

### **LIBRARY OR SHOPPING BAG**

A strong library book bag or shopping bag can be made by stitching together

two of the larger table centres and adding handles. For extra strength, line the bag with cotton fabric.

### **BOOK COVER**

Maybe a well-used book like a dictionary or your Bible could be protected by using a lovely old table centre as a cover.

- Open the book onto the table centre, fold it around and stitch together by hand inside the front and back covers.
- The pieces at the top and bottom of the spine can be cut and hand-stitched and folded under.

### **STILL MORE USES?**

The uses keep coming for ideas for old doilies. I'm sure readers will think of many more.

My art and craft group recently staged a doily morning tea, where we put all our ancient doilies on show. My idea of the coat hanger covers was a real people-pleaser and gave many the challenge to put their doilies to good use in a similar manner. Why not dig yours out and see what they might be used for? ☺

## **ROSES PLUS**



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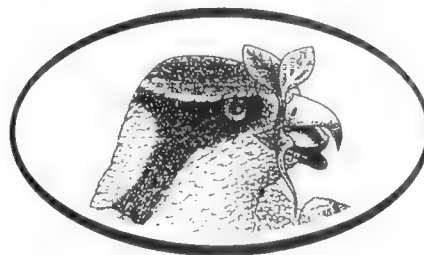
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# Muesli Munchies

There are more ways to eat muesli than in a bowl for brekky. Try these moresome munchies.

## MUNZAC BISCUITS

- 1 cup plain flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown sugar
- 1 cup muesli
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coconut
- 125 g butter
- 1 tbsp golden syrup
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp bicarb soda
- 2 tbsp water

Preheat oven to 180°C. Mix together the flour, sugar, muesli and coconut in a bowl. In a small saucepan, melt the butter and golden syrup over gentle heat. Mix the bicarb and the boiling water in a cup and add this to the saucepan. Remove from heat. Pour this mixture into the bowl of dry ingredients and stir well. Place small teaspoons of the mixture on greased or paper-lined oven trays and bake for 15 – 20 minutes. Allow to cool before removing from the tray. Store in an airtight container. Makes 40.

## RHUBARB CRUMBLE

- 1 lge bunch rhubarb, chopped into 2 cm pieces
- 1 tbsp orange peel, finely grated
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup wholemeal plain flour
- 90 g butter, cut into small pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup brown sugar plus extra 2 tbsp
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coconut
- 1 cup muesli

Preheat oven to 180° C. Place the rhubarb in a greased oven dish and sprinkle over the orange peel and two tablespoons of brown sugar. Combine the flour, butter, half cup of sugar, cinnamon, coconut and the muesli in a food processor and pulse until the texture resembles coarse breadcrumbs (overprocessing will result in a dry crumble). Cover the rhubarb with crumble and dot with a little extra butter. Bake for 30 minutes or until edges are bubbling and topping is golden brown. Serves 6.

## MUESLI THINS

- 2 cups muesli
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup plain flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 90 g butter, chopped
- 2 tbsp milk

Process the muesli in a food processor until fine. Then add flour, baking powder and salt, and butter, processing until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the milk and process only until the mixture is beginning to come together. It should be a stiff dough consistency. Remove from the processor, press into a ball, cover with plastic wrap and let rest for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 180° C. Roll the mixture out on a floured surface until it is no more than 0.5 cm thick (the thinner the better), cut into circles or squares, place on baking paper and cook for 20 minutes or until golden. Cool on wire



racks. Keep in an airtight container. These savoury biscuits are delicious topped with soft cheese and quince paste. Makes 18.

Jodie Kewley

## MUESLI SLICE

- 125 g butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup honey
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup caster or raw sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups coconut
- 1 cup rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup wholemeal SR flour
- 1 cup dried mixed fruit (chopped), nuts or seeds

Grease a slice or lamington tray or line it with baking paper. Combine butter, honey and sugar in a small saucepan. Stir over low heat, without boiling, until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved. Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the butter mixture and mix together. Press into the tin and bake in moderate oven for 20 minutes. Cool in tin before cutting into slices. Can be drizzled with chocolate when cooled.

Deirdre Swanson



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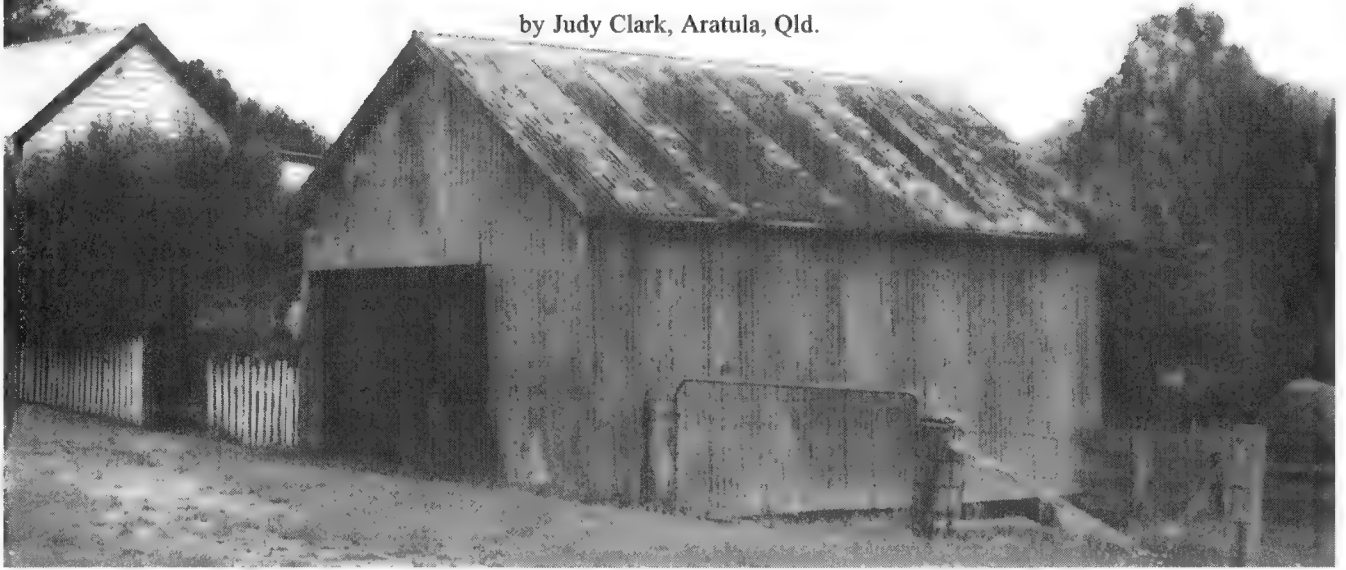
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# Every Man Needs A Shed

by Judy Clark, Aratula, Qld.



Family must be a strong incentive for a couple of old fogies like us to up stakes and move yet again, from a settled life in NSW back to Queensland. We haven't regretted the move, but we must be mad. We are building again for the third time.

We found a lovely bit of Australia at Aratula in the Fassifern Valley and are lodging with friends and have our belongings stored in their hay shed. We chose the builder for the house, then the big search was underway for the best kit shed. Days were spent driving around shed centres, getting quotes and looking for special prices to be able to afford the Ideal Shed. 'The shed must go up first', The Man Of The House (MOTH) said. 'We can build it before the house is started. I need a place to work from as I have jobs waiting to be done', said the MOTH. '

The shed was duly purchased and delivered, the site levelled and the slab poured. Armed with two rechargeable drills, we set forth to do battle with the pile of metal dumped over our gate (the truck wouldn't fit through), only to find just a simple instruction book and no materials list to say which part went where. A day was spent sorting out where this went and what that was for and what that did.

Next day we had the first main

pieces standing. The rechargeable drills were very slow and not strong enough to go through some pieces. The power was not on yet as the MOTH wanted to have it connected to the shed first to cut out the expense of a builder's pole hire fee (over \$400).

So help was organised with number one son, MOTH junior. We could see the shed taking weeks to build at this rate, so MOTH junior brought a generator. The wonders of modern technology! MOTH junior is a roof fixer in his spare time, so guess what job he was pigeon-holed for. The MOTH could do the roof, but why not use younger legs?

The MOTH and MOTH junior had their heads together for another half a day over the 'Claytons Instruction Book' (CIB, the instruction book you have when you don't have any instructions) and a track was becoming worn between the metal pile and slab, sorting, sorting, ever sorting.

Finally, we had the frame up, after many references to the CIB, which also showed, in pictures only, a part that was not there. After many phone calls, the missing part was thrown over the fence by the supplier, when we were not there. It was the wrong size, so out came the grinder and we made it fit! A corner brace is a corner brace, after all.

MOTH junior went up top and put on the rafters and roofing iron. A major milestone was reached. The roof was on!

During the days it took to get to this stage, further down the road and around the bend that we had to pass to get here every day, another shed was going up – bigger than ours. The first day the entire frame and roof was up. Enough to make a grown MOTH cry. The second day it was entirely clad and finished. Mrs MOTH did cry!

The CIB was in danger of suffering a permanent injury, but we needed the pictures in it to go by. The MOTH even went with CIB in hand to the 'Other Shed Builders' for help and to please explain the CIB. They were not much help. 'Just keep on doing what you are doing mate, you'll be right', they said with a sarcastic grin!

The MOTH had been given a name change by this stage. Seeing as we didn't have a house started yet, he had become the Man Of The Shed (MOTS). MOTS and I started to clad the walls. We had the generator permanently in our possession by that time and were not about to let MOTS junior take it back!

MOTS junior brought out number one friend, another roof fixer. Between the four of us we toiled all day and had



the shed finished, bar the roller doors.

The missing brace had to be removed to fit in the roller door! On a countback MOTS, MOTS junior and number one best friend decided all their troubles started not only with the CIB, but with the slab layer who positioned the stirrups in the concrete for the uprights to bolt onto in the wrong place in the first place, which threw out all measurements. Number one best friend was about ready to take the CIB behind the nearest gum tree, but we decided we still needed it after all. We had plans for the CIB.

The priorities were maintained. The shed went up first. There was still no sign of the house, but the mobile phone bill was growing chasing it! So the all important Shed God (SG) had been appeased. The MOTS had his temple built, and no car shall ever set a muddy tyre inside *this* shed!

Then the next stage was underway. Every temple needs an altar and MOTS was building the mother of all altars. He called it . . . *his bench*. After much searching of hardware stores, the right materials – at the right price – were

found at the local demolition yard.

One corner though was devoted to another passion – model trains. A full bay of a three-bay shed was set aside in the temple and a plan was underway for track and layout and all manner of wonderful things to keep the SG happy. The SG must have been very happy as the MOTS reneged on his plan to stack our winter hay supply against the outside of the shed under a tarp and put it inside against one roller door, so it did not grow legs and walk.

The SG must have been really happy because next the Ozzie Kleen septic tank

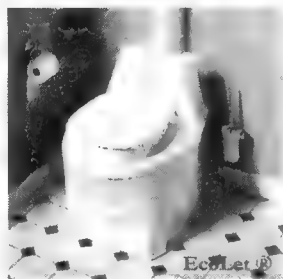
and hoses were stored in one bay of the shed for the same reason as the hay (tank is plastic and light to lift).

The threat of loss of property, and the subsequent replacement costs, must take priority for a little while. Then woe betide any nonshed stuff that wants to enter in. Now all I have to do is find somewhere to store my saddlery and harness. That middle bay is starting to look good, but then I do not wish to follow the fate of the CIB and become a burnt offering to the SG.

*Every woman needs a shed!* One day! ☘



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# Sheep Know-How

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

We've been discussing breeds of sheep in GR for a year or so now, and in this issue we are taking a break to look closely at some of the terms mentioned that are specific to sheep keeping. There's not usually room in the breed profiles to do justice to ovine jargon or explain the significance of the more important physical characteristics. As well, we've jumped around with the breeds: short-woolled, long-woolled, and even strong-woolled; classified some as being of Downs type, or displaying Downs wool; laboured over the qualities of prime lamb producing breeds (terminal sires); then suddenly introduced the concept of specialist maternal breeds. You could be forgiven for feeling confused and bleating discontentedly, as lots of explanatory detail has been skipped over.

## BREEDS IN CONTEXT

The present emphasis in commercial sheep farming is efficiency of meat production, and even Merino breeders are being encouraged to set stock aside for this activity. Normally, Merinos are kept for fleece production, with cull animals being sold off for mutton; diminishing returns are now forcing farmers to turn to producing prime lamb.

About 85 percent of the national sheep flock is Merino, and another 10 percent are derivatives of the breed, like Corriedale and Polwarth. The Merino also exists in different types or strains that have specific fleece characteristics, or can thrive under distinctly different climatic conditions. The Peppin and the Saxon are examples of two strains. Different strains of Merino can produce remarkably different types of wool (ultrafine, fine, medium, etc) and cut different weights of wool, as well as showing marked differences in body size. In recent years, the Dohne and the Australian Meat Merino have been developed as dual purpose (meat and wool) and the South African Meat Merino (SAMM) imported to help fill this segment of the market.



Most of the remaining five percent of the national flock is made up of sheep of British origin, or are breeds that have been created by crossing British breeds. This includes meat-producing breeds like Dorset, Suffolk, Southdown, Hampshire and Ryeland, and the strong-woolled breeds like Border Leicester, English Leicester, Lincoln, Cheviot, Romney and Perendale. The strong-woolled breeds are dual purpose in that they are able to produce a good-sized lamb.

Back in the 1980s, carpet wool breeds were popular. These were derived from special lines of strong-woolled breeds, and included the Carpetmaster, Drysdale, Tukidale and Elliotdale. These breeds produce fairly straight hairy fibre that adds resilience and improved wearing qualities to carpet. The carpet wool fibre is also medulated: its centre contains hollow cells. Unfortunately, medulated fibre is regarded as a contaminant and a potential cause of downgrading in the national wool clip. Changes in the market, too, have reduced the value of such specialty fibre – the fleece grows so quickly, the sheep have to be shorn twice yearly, and the costs of this are greater than the returns from the fibre. Carpet wool breeds are now on the decline. Other strong-wool breeds, like

the Perendale, and some exotic breeds, also carry medulated fibre.

Imported breeds make up the remaining tiny portion of the national flock. These include milking breeds like the East Friesian, maternal breeds like the Finn and meat breeds like the Texel and Dorper. There are also exotics like the Gotland, Karakul, Damara and Blackheaded Persian. Coloured fibre, which many of the exotics carry, is also a serious contaminant of the national clip.

## BREEDING MEAT

A purebred flock can be mated and the offspring sold in the market, but they probably won't grow as quickly or produce a carcass as good as lambs from the traditional first- and second-cross breeding program. In this, the ewes are mainly Merinos that have been culled from fibre production due to age or lack of quality. They are mated with a specialist maternal sire, which confers important qualities to his daughters like high fertility, good milking ability and superior mothering, characteristics that are not strong in the Merino. We have already profiled the Border Leicester, which is the top maternal sire, but others include the East Friesian, Finn and Coopworth. The daughters of this mating are kept on for

breeding as first-cross (F1) ewes and the male lambs are sold. The F1 ewes are mated to meat producing sires, usually called terminal sires because their offspring are not going to be bred from but are all sent for slaughter.

Prime lamb is cost effective to produce when it is the result of a program that produces a fast-growing and early maturing lamb, with a high yielding carcass that is lean and boasts a good eye muscle area. Lamb is grown to different weights depending on market requirements. Breeds discussed in GR like the Suffolk, Dorset Horn, Hampshire, Southdown and Ryeland are examples of terminal sires. As well, some long-woolled breeds are used as terminal sires for meat production, especially on small farms.

#### WHAT IS THE DOWNS TYPE?

This term cropped up in a number of the breed profiles and refers to sheep that have characteristics derived from the Southdown. These include a desirable meat carcass shape with well-developed hindquarters, early maturity in lambs, excellent textured and flavoured meat and a short-stapled, dense fleece. Downs-type fleece is extremely springy and ideal for doonas and pillows where the filling is expected to spring back into shape after compression. Downs-type sheep are classed as short-woolled, but not all short-woolled breeds (eg: the Dorset Horn and the Ryeland) have evolved from the Southdown. Downs-type breeds include the Dorset Horn, Hampshire, Suffolk and Shropshire.

#### LONG AND SHORT WOOLLED

Currently, there is little commercial call for the long, strong (coarse) wool produced by breeds like the Lincoln, English Leicester, Romney, Cheviot and Perendale, although hand-spinners eagerly seek it. There have been established markets, but at present no area of fibre production is buoyant. Long-woolled breeds produce fibre with lustre because the scales around the fibre are flatter and longer than on fine (Merino) wool, and so reflect more light, which gives them a lustrous appearance. Both Lincoln and English Leicester have a glossy lustre, the Border Leicester a golden demi-lustre, and the Romney a

silvery demi-lustre. By comparison, short wool is chalky white.

The long-woolled breeds do very well in high-rainfall areas, unlike Merino-based sheep, and frequently suit smallholders who buy hill country.

#### PHYSICAL DETAIL

When describing a particular breed or comparing it with another, physical characteristics may be emphasised; for example, a breed may be clean-faced. The significance of this is not just cosmetic, and the fact that some breeds have wool on their cheeks while others do not impacts on management. Clean-faced sheep, like Borders, Suffolk, Cheviot and Perendale are very alert, so they are hard on fencing, often trying to get under, and they may be a little toey when being moved. The advantage, however, is that they need no wiggling (shearing wool off the face) and have few problems with grass seeds, as breeds with clean faces usually have fairly clean legs.

Another characteristic frequently mentioned is hoof colour. This also has more than cosmetic value, as dark coloured hooves are harder and more able to withstand the effects of wet ground than natural or pink coloured hooves. The latter are softer and susceptible to footrot. The Merino and its derivatives have natural coloured hooves and are not recommended for high-rainfall areas. There is also a link between muzzle and hoof colour: pink muzzle and pink hooves occur together, while a coloured muzzle will have matching coloured hooves. Skin cancer isn't a great problem with sheep, so the muzzle colour doesn't necessarily play

a contributing or protecting role as it does in cattle.

#### BREEDING

Some breeds of sheep are seasonal breeders and others are able to be mated at any time. Rams are willing and capable breeders year round, it's ewes that have seasonal or nonseasonal oestrus. The Dorset Horn and Poll Dorset have the ability to get in lamb out of season, as does the Merino, which means farmers can plan lambing to maximise market returns. Ewes from Poll and Dorset Horn are primarily used for breeding rams for prime lamb production, but of course, the breeding flexibility of the Merino is an asset with crossbreeding.

#### STUPID OR SMART

Love or loathe them, sheep are handy creatures on small farms. If you have previously dismissed them as totally stupid, we have news for you! Recent research shows that sheep can recognise and recall the faces of at least 10 humans for up to two years, and remember at least 50 flockmates for that same duration. This puts a completely different slant on sheep behaviour – no abusive yelling or harsh handling if you want compliant, cooperative animals.

The next project must be on gossip: do sheep pass on recommendations of who is a soft touch and who to avoid like the plague? ☺

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# A New GR Challenge

by Robin Galbreath, Angaston, SA.

After much hard work, I recently achieved a positive change in my finances, but I'm wondering if it's negated by the environmental impact. Like many GR readers, for years I have dreamt of my own patch of paradise with chooks, organic vegies and an energy efficient house, but puzzled over how to achieve it.

After leaving school halfway through my final year and a long period of unemployment, I finally obtained an apprenticeship at the Adelaide Botanic Garden. Having completed the apprenticeship and worked for a while renovating the neglected garden of a historic house in the Adelaide Hills, I decided that it was time to continue my education, so I quit work to go to university. From a personal point of view, going to uni was the best thing I have done. I made some great friends, learnt heaps and had a ball, managing to combine having a good time with getting good grades. Then reality struck when the time came to return to the workforce. The supply of people with environmental degrees far exceeds the demand. After two years endlessly applying for jobs and travelling around Australia WWOOFing to keep myself occupied, I decided more qualifications were required, so went back to uni to obtain honours in zoology.

Initially this worked. I immediately obtained a position working in Kakadu National Park, but unfortunately this was the start of a recurring pattern of short-term contract positions only ever obtained through contacts, not interviews. In the environmental field, it seems, the only way to obtain work is through networking, being great at yarning your way through job interviews, or just being lucky! That is a problem for people like me who don't have the networking skills or the confidence required to sell themselves in interviews. Then there is also the frustration of applying and being interviewed for positions that aren't

actually vacant, but have been advertised as someone's contract has expired, more funding has been obtained and the incumbent will be re-employed, but rules require that the position be advertised anyway. This causes no end of pointless worry about the interview and the wait for a reply afterwards. I finally twigged to that one and started asking whether that was the situation prior to applying. It sure saves a huge waste of emotional energy (and time).

It's now seven years since completing honours, during which time I have had five short-term jobs using my degree. Between these jobs I have travelled all over Australia with my caravan (solar powered of course), WWOOFed at over 25 farms, visited heaps of national parks and done a variety of seasonal jobs such as grapevine pruning and fruit picking.

I've seen more of Australia than most people and acquired lots of ideas on how to run an organic farm, but what about getting that place of my own? No way was that going to happen if the current employment pattern continued. I finally admitted that I had Buckley's of getting long-term employment with my degree that would allow me to obtain the loan for that patch of paradise, so I decided to buy myself a job. With my gardening qualifications and my love of working outdoors, it seemed obvious that the way to go was to purchase a lawn-mowing and gardening round (not having the resources to start up that organic market garden I dream about). However, after many years of working in rural areas there was no way I wanted to return to the suburbs. This problem was solved when a round became available in the Barossa Valley.

So what now? I have secure employment and a business that I can grow, and I should now be able to afford to obtain that GR lifestyle. The

problem is: I'm a bit of a greenie concerned about our planet and my job involves constantly driving between people's properties and using petrol-powered brushcutters, mowers, blowers and hedgetrimmers, encouraging people to have lovely, green, environmentally unsound lawns! How do I live with myself? At least when I was working for Forestry Tasmania they were paying me to try to find reasons why they couldn't log patches of forest and I did manage to save my fair share of trees, but now? If it allows me to obtain my environmentally responsible lifestyle is it worth it? Nothing in life is that simple is it?

Anyway, here I am, new to the Barossa and taking on a fresh challenge. If anyone in the region is interested in taking some lawn clippings off my hands (great mulch!), or would like to get in touch with a like-minded person, I'd like to hear from you.

Robin can be contacted on 0421-418-780, or at PO Box 267, Angaston 5353. ☘

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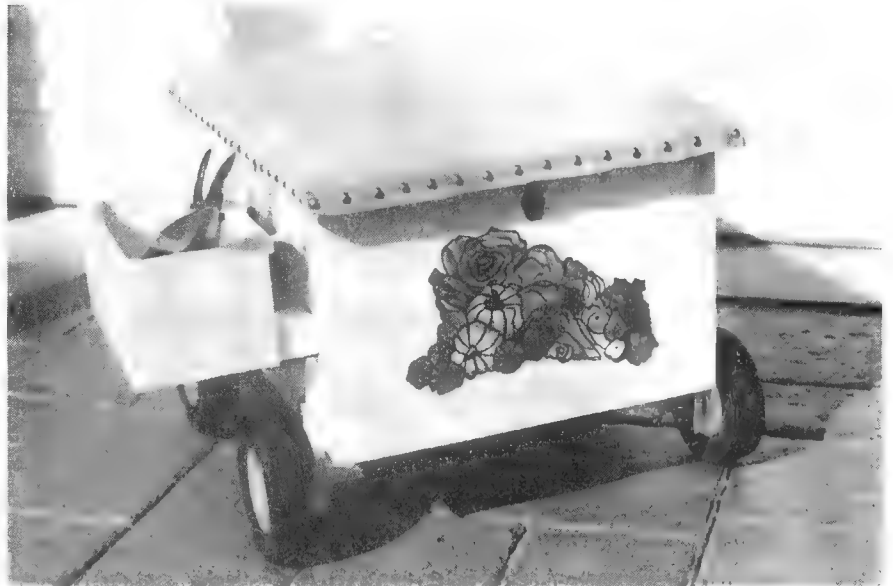
# GARDENERS' BOX SEAT

by Alan Stewart, Alexandra Hills, Qld.

This wheeled seat-cum-storage box is a practical device for gardeners, especially the elderly or those with a disability. I find it very handy when working on my raised beds. I can wheel it around; sit or kneel on it; and store tools, gadgets, drinks or snacks in it. The average handyperson will find it very easy to build from a number of leftover or recycled materials.

Plywood would be ideal to use, or you can adapt any suitable recycled sheeting-style material. The dimensions shown on the diagrams can be adjusted to suit your own physique, however, this one should be adequate for most people.

I constructed the main body from an old cupboard, and got the wheels from a lawnmower I acquired from our council recycling yard for \$10. Luckily, the wheel bearings were still in good order. The vinyl covering and foam for the seat cost me \$13, but you might have these materials on hand. I used leftover paint from a decorating job. Our grandson Ben Jackson did the artwork and my wife Pauline tackled the upholstery. It proved to be a useful and satisfying project with an overall cost of \$25.



This padded garden seat on wheels has a multitude of uses around the home and farm and is simple to make.

## SEAT CONSTRUCTION

The construction could not be simpler. The basis is just a four-sided box reinforced at the corners with 15 x 15-millimetre square wood pieces.

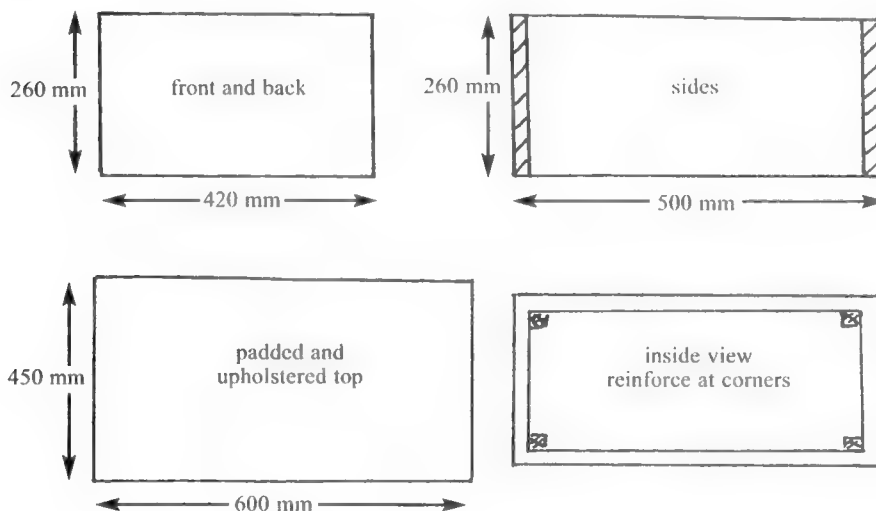
Cut out front, back and sides and glue them together to make a box,

butting the ends together. Always check the diagonals to ensure the box is square.

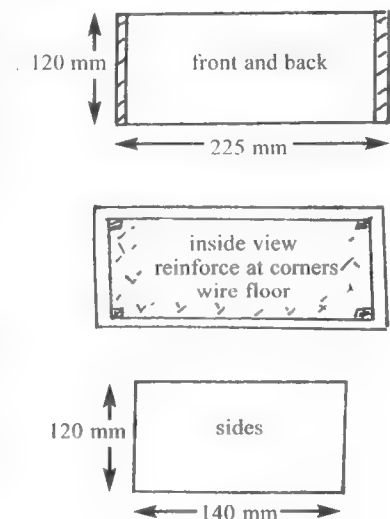
Measure dimensions and make a floor to fit. Glue and screw it in place.

Measure and cut a lid that projects slightly all the way around the top of

## Mobile Cart



## Tool Carrier



## A Multitude Of Uses

A certain poultry keeper in the office has pointed out that Alan's nifty box seat would also be very handy for chook keepers, allowing them to sit in reasonable comfort while tackling such tasks as clipping spurs and treating scaly leg. The box will, of course, carry poultry paraphernalia just as well as gardening gadgets. Suitable ventilation to the box could even allow it to do service as a chook carrier.

We can see it being used as a toybox or a laundry hamper as well. The addition of a detachable long handle to push or pull it around with would eliminate the need to bend while transporting it from place to place.

the box. Fit hinges to the lid and box, but do not screw them in place until you are satisfied that everything remains square. When it all looks okay, mark where the hinges fit and remove the hinges from the lid.

The lid can now be upholstered using foam rubber and vinyl secured with upholstery tacks.

Reattach the lid to the box, screwing the hinges on the lid where marked.

Attach a handle to the back and a hasp and staple to the front to keep the lid fastened.

If using lawnmower wheels, bolt them on to the sides. If using other wheels, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Paint and decorate as desired.

### OPTIONAL TOOL CARRIER

You can, if you desire, make a small wooden box to attach to the outside of the seat as a tool carrier. This toolbox can be made any size, but should be kept small enough to neatly hook onto the side of the seat without interfering with its mobility. A wire mesh base to the toolbox will allow soil and moisture to fall through.

Fit two eye hooks to the toolbox and two cup hooks to the side of the seat. Two wooden spacers glued to the side of the seat will keep the toolbox level and prevent it bumping and rubbing. ♣

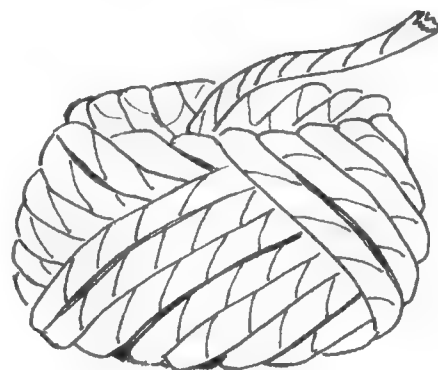
# Knowing The Ropes

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

Poly or artificial ropes and cords need to have the ends tied, singed, or dipped in shellac, varnish or glue after cutting in order to prevent unravelling. I find singeing or melting the ends the easiest and best because they will never unravel. Unfortunately, this method is also the most dangerous (if the molten drips touch the skin they will stick and severely burn). Hold the end of the rope with a pair of pliers or a gloved hand, then hold a match or lighter under the end of the rope and slowly turn the rope until the end begins to melt and run. The more the end is streamlined the better, for it can then be threaded through tight places.

Another use (questionable) of poly cord was shown to me by a neighbour. He keeps a recently purchased roll of poly string in his bathroom. When dental flossing time rolls around he unravels the end of the string, selects the right number of strands and cuts off enough to comfortably floss his teeth.

Perhaps the most annoying thing about ropes is trying to unravel a knot, particularly one that has been pulled tight under pressure. I've seen quite a number of so-called solutions; they range from dipping the knot into hot water and trying to work it while still wet, to applying talcum powder to the knot and then working it. Another idea is to leave the knot in the sun for an hour or two before trying to undo it.



Personally, I prefer to attack knots with a screwdriver and pliers.

A good idea for a natural fibre rope, especially one that is prickly, is to lay it around a garden bed. Apparently, snails and slugs find it difficult (and uncomfortable) trying to slide over it. I've also heard that if a prickly rope is wrapped several times around a pole it will prevent ants and snakes from climbing up, though I can't vouch for it. Another great use for a natural rope is to bury one end of a short thick rope (felt and cloth can also be used) into the soil of a potted plant, and immerse the other end into a container of water that is suspended slightly above the potted plant. The capillary action will slowly water the plant while you're away on holidays.

One of the most attractive uses for rope I've seen is a very thick, soft, white or coloured rope suspended by chrome rings along a staircase or raised floor. ♣

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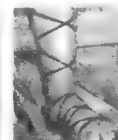
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# How Sweet It Is

by Ken Moore, Glamorgan Vale, Qld.

It seems to me that the best vegetables for the home garden are those that are easy to grow, have a variety of uses in the kitchen and are prolific. The sweet potato fits the bill perfectly.

The kumara or sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) originates from Central and South America. It is now extensively grown throughout the Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Southeast Asia and in the warmer parts of Australia. It is a vigorous vine, with largish leaves, that produces a crop of torpedo-shaped tubers. It is quite different from both yam and taro.

There are many varieties of sweet potato available, but the home-grower usually knows them by their colour. I grow the golden (skin and flesh), red (red skin and white flesh) and the white (skin and flesh).

## GROWING KUMARA

The vine grows in full sun, but can take light shade. It prefers sandy or soft soil for the best development of the tubers. As my soil is heavy clay, I have to grow in built-up beds, using straw, compost and matured cow dung. The borders to the beds are rocks from the property. I also add gypsum to help break up the clay.

Sweet potato is sensitive to frost. In the area I live, south-east Queensland, I don't get frosts so can grow it year round as a perennial. In frosty areas,



## SUCCESSFUL SWEET POTATO

For best results when growing sweet potato:

- grow in full sun
- plant into deep, friable, well-fertilised soil
- plant after frost
- water regularly
- don't leave in the ground too long. Happy planting.

planting out should be done after the frosts and the plant should be treated as an annual. I plant out on about a 50-centimetre grid pattern, but the vines quickly cover the whole bed.

Sweet potato requires regular watering. After a while weeds don't get much of a go, as they are choked out.

Propagation is usually from vine cuttings, which root readily, but sprouts cut from the tuber can also be used. I find the latter method handy when I have acquired a good variety of tubers worthy of growing.

Harvesting by digging can begin four or five months after planting. If left in the ground too long, the tubers become large and rather stringy.

This vegetable is relatively free of pests. I grow without pesticides or fertilisers. My main worry is field mice,

which do attack the tubers, especially those at the surface.

## A VERSATILE VINE

The sweet potato really comes into its own in the kitchen. We regularly have ours steamed, boiled, mashed, fried, chipped, roasted, added to stews, and in frittatas. Try a soup recipe – kumara vichyssoise will delight the taste buds. It can add flavour to home-baked bread, damper and scones. I have seen recipes for puddings and kebabs. In short, it is very versatile and could be used in place of ordinary potatoes.

Furthermore, sweet potato is a healthy food. It is fat-free, high in carbohydrates, and a good source of vitamins B1 and B3 and vitamin C. The golden varieties, in particular, contain betacarotene, which converts to the antioxidant vitamin A. It has a lower glycaemic index than ordinary potato.

But that is just the tuber! I have used the tender leaves cooked as a green vegetable (it tastes like spinach), and the tender growing tips in stir-fries (quite nice). If salads are your thing, the young leaves can be used in that, too, and have a stronger flavour than lettuce.

## Beyond The Kitchen

This versatile veg has more uses than you would think.

- In the area I live, the local agricultural shows have sweet potato as a competition class, which I enter to add a further interest to my gardening.

- Sweet potato is so vigorous that it can be used as a ground cover in an orchard, for example, or to provide a green cover-up over a fence or stump.

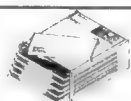
- I feed the raw skins, chopped up to thumbnail size, to my chooks.

- The leaves can be fed to livestock; my cows love them. Chopped-up tubers can also be fed to livestock. I have been told that pigs, especially, like them.

For home gardeners, and those seeking a self-sufficiency lifestyle in a warmish climate, the sweet potato has a lot going for it. ☘

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# Livestock Health and Management

## Information You Need but Haven't Known Where to Ask

If you have queries on any type of livestock, send them in and we'll get our panel of experts to research the problem for you. Post them to Livestock Advice Page, Grass Roots, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

### RABBIT RUMBLINGS

We promised our daughter a rabbit for her birthday later this year and now have cold feet about it. We can get a commercially made hutch at a weekend market nearby, so housing is not a problem, but what on earth do we feed a rabbit? Would lettuce leaves and household scraps be enough, or would we have to buy a ration? Has GR had an article in the past on rabbit keeping? Would it be cruel just to have one animal or should it have a friend?

**Belinda & Tom,  
HEIDELBERG 3084.**

*If you are near a pet shop, it would be worthwhile asking if they have a booklet on keeping rabbits, or you could make a visit to your nearest library and borrow suitable books. It is essential the information gathering is shared by your daughter so she is able to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility. The bunny will enjoy a range of greens like milk thistles, silverbeet, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, most fruits and even fruit tree prunings. It is unlikely there will be sufficient nutrition in the greens to provide a balanced diet, so you may need to supplement it with either barley or a similar grain or a specially formulated rabbit mix. Usually this is*

*given a couple of times a week. Bunny will also need access to fresh water at all times. It is normal to discuss dietary needs with the breeder when ordering a pet or picking it up. Alternatively, if you are getting the animal from a pet shop, ask them what they have been feeding, the quantity and how often. A single pet will be appropriate to start with. It will be more responsive to your daughter and easier for her to manage. Do not consider extra animals until she demonstrates confidence in handling the rabbit and managing its daily requirements.*

*Though we know you do not intend to eat your prospective pet, the article about keeping meat rabbits in GR 156 contains much useful information about bunny welfare.*

### TICK PARALYSIS

We love living up here after years of wet cold weather in Victoria, but are still not on top of the different demands in caring for livestock. We lost a calf recently from a tick and paralysis and feel quite devastated. We've now found out about their three-stage life cycle and the fact they're likely to be a problem in the next few months (July to December), with spring being the danger period. Our question is, what

actually kills the animals? Is it blood poisoning, and can we prevent it?

**Nerida & James Walsh,  
CASINO 2470.**

*We're assuming your calf was a victim of the scrub or paralysis tick (Ixodes holocyclus) and recommend you sort through your back copies of GR for no 148 and reread the article 'Common Ticks of Australia'. Bovines suffer from both paralysis and cattle ticks, and when stock are brought into northern areas without having acquired resistance to ticks the outcome can be serious. Cows bred locally should have some resistance. Adult female ticks secrete and inject considerable amounts of toxin via the salivary glands and this is deleterious to the nervous system of the infected animal (or human). Loss of coordination of hindquarters is one of the first signs, due to involvement of the neuromuscular system. Respiratory muscles are also affected, resulting in acidosis and damage to organs connected to the movement of blood around the body. Ultimately, breathing ability deteriorates and death results. It is possible to treat valuable or much-loved animals with anti-tick serum. A vet servicing dairy or beef producers may be able to offer advice on future protection. 🐾*



### Passion for Poultry?

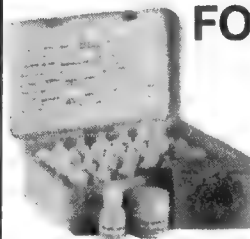
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## FIRST BIODIESEL FLEET

Newcastle City Council, NSW, is the first council in Australia to convert its diesel fleet of 228 vehicles to a biodiesel fuel mixture. After a smallscale trial period showed a 33 percent reduction in carbon monoxide emissions and a 26 percent reduction in black smoke emissions the council decided to convert the whole fleet to the mixture. A blend of 80 percent petrodiesel and 20 percent biodiesel has been introduced. Biodiesel burns cleaner and is renewable, being made from used cooking oil, and animal fats.

## PROGRESS ON RIVER HEALTH

Seven of Victoria's most degraded rivers will have a measure of protection with the announcement of a moratorium on water entitlements. No new entitlements for the Werribee, Moorabool, Snowy, Barwon, Thomson/Macalister, Latrobe and Yarra Rivers will be issued. New water users will have to buy existing entitlements. Over time, extra environmental flows, determined by management plans based on scientific recommendations, will be allocated to the river systems as needed.

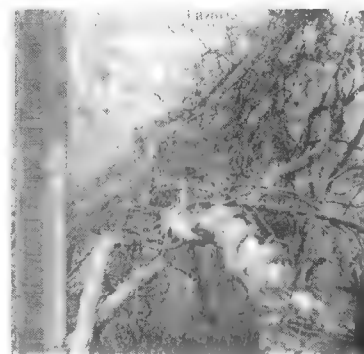
Over seven years \$150 million will be spent to improve the health of the Murray-Darling Basin. This program will focus on structural and operational modifications to improve river and catchment health. Better management will lead to greater capacity to enhance flows and benefit the environment with minimal negative impact on water users. Specific activities will include modification of weirs to allow fish movement, resnagging of the river channel to improve habitat, removal or modification of structures that impede water flow across the floodplain and revegetation of the riparian zone. This program is separate from ongoing community consultation on the Living Murray initiative to increase environmental flows.

The Paroo River is often referred to as Australia's last wild river, being one of the few considered to be in near pristine condition, and has been the focus of a campaign to ensure its protection from development and exploitation. A

recent historic agreement between the premiers of Queensland and NSW is aimed at protecting the river and its 76,000 square kilometre catchment area. The agreement is aimed at preventing the exploitation of the river for irrigation, ensuring security of use for current water users and protecting the ecology. In combination with the Warrego River, the Paroo floods 814,000 hectares of the Murray-Darling Basin and is of major importance in maintaining the biodiversity of the wetlands. Conservationists are optimistic that this agreement will be the forerunner of future cooperation between states to protect the environment.

## ENVIROFRIENDLY CO-HOUSING

A Victorian-era weatherboard ex-school building in West Brunswick, Victoria, is the scene of an exciting housing development. WestWyck is now a residential co-housing complex shared by 12 residents. The residents have a strong commitment to the environment that has been expressed in the redevelopment of the building. Cars are relegated to the rear of the site, shared and private living spaces have been incorporated, Australian-sourced products and labour have been used wherever possible, and some materials from the old school have been given a new life. Steel beams from the shelter sheds were used to support the mezzanine floor, bricks from the toilet block were cleaned and reused and the science room sinks installed in some of the apartment bathrooms. Energy efficiency and on-site waste disposal were priorities. Greywater is ultraviolet treated and reused to flush the toilets. The black water is then processed through a vermiculture sewage composting system. When completed, the complex will consist of seven self-contained apartments in the original building and five terrace houses to be built at the south end of the site. These latter will generate their own power via photovoltaic cells. The WestWyck project is a demonstration of what can be achieved with enthusiasm and commitment, even in a city environment.



## THREATENED FLORA INFO

Tasmania's Threatened Species Protection Act lists 485 flora species, 128 of which are endemic to Tasmania. A newly launched CD lists all the plants, describes them and indicates where they appear, what their ecological needs are and what threats they face. All land managers and planners in Tasmania will find it a useful resource.

The CD is available from The Threatened Species Unit, ph: 03-6233-8759, or email: Louise.Jerrim@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

## GLYPHOSATE IN THE NEWS

According to a report in the *Nimbin Magazine*, December/January 2004, glyphosate, contained in Roundup, has been banned in Denmark after it was found that the herbicide had contaminated drinking water. The glyphosate seeped through the soil into the water table and was not broken down by soil microorganisms.

Another report, in *The Organic Grower*, February 2004, exposes a link between glyphosate use and fusarium fungal infestations in wheat crops. Scientists in Saskatchewan said that glyphosate-treated wheat appeared to have a higher level of fusarium head blight than was found in untreated crops. Experiments found that glyphosate application seemed to encourage fusarium colonies in the root zone. Fusarium not only leads to serious crop losses, but poses concerns about human health if it enters the food chain. About a fifth of each year's wheat crop in Europe is lost to fusarium head blight and in 2002 from 30 to 40 percent of the crop in Michigan, USA, was destroyed by the fungus. ☘

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I recently **EMIGRATED TO AUSTRALIA FROM ENGLAND** with my husband and have just finished reading your mag for the first, but definitely not the last, time. I've become much more 'green' aware since moving to Adelaide. The local council in England was only just introducing kerbside recycling as we were leaving. I actually purchased Robin Stewart's *Australian Green Home & Garden*, which you reviewed in GR 162. It is brilliant, especially for a newcomer like myself, and has become my bible.

We live in rented accommodation at present, as we're unsure whether to buy or build (straw bales have caught hubby's attention), so we're limited as to how green we can be. We must be doing something right, though, as we've been now labelled tree-huggers by his Aussie cousins! I certainly won't be hugging any trees – there might be spiders lurking and I'm terrified of them. I'm trying to come to terms with their good points, except the deadly ones, and I've weeded and mulched the garden beds on my own while watching from the corner of my eye as things crawl around me.

I would also recommend a book mentioned in GR 160, by Tanya Ha (involved with Plant Ark), called *Greeniology*. It's an excellent all-rounder written in plain English.

Regarding the restless legs item: I've suffered since my teens and have found lying with my legs higher than my heart helpful. Beds can be raised a little with bricks, but if you have a known heart condition you need to check with your doctor first.

**Sandi Waters-Lewis (and hubby Beuf),  
8/27 Simone Cres, MORPHETT VALE 5162.**

*Welcome Sandi and Beuf to GR and Australia. Thanks for your helpful suggestions and one tip with gardening – good gloves are a must.*

**Dear GR,**

Thank you to all contributors for inspiring, motivating and exciting me with all the wonderful articles and letters. My partner and I have just moved to our new property 30 kilometres north-west of Kyogle in northern NSW. We are very excited by the (seemingly) millions of possibilities open to us in all areas of development.

We have abundant clay in our subsoil (I think!) and I am charmed by all facets of **COB BUILDING**. I am very interested in finding out about cob building from anyone who has attempted or actually built in cob as information is fairly scarce. Information from people who have a council-approved cob dwelling regarding the legal process they went through is of particular interest, also encounters with councils over owner-built composting toilets!

I am hoping to hear from someone who knows of comprehensive, illustrated books on bush tucker, Australian mammals and mushroom identifying. Anyone know where to obtain kombucha culture in far north NSW?

It is always great to read letters and articles from members of the GR family who are of an age when many have slowed down and retreated from activities, I hope to be 'Grass Rooting' well into my 90s as many readers are (I'm 23!).

Long live diversity and love.

**Jessie Nelson,**

**144 Stringybark Lane, TOONUMBAR 2474.**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

While in the Chinchilla area of Queensland for a bush holiday I was **BITTEN BY SEVERAL TICKS** and became very ill with Lyme disease. Not just your everyday tick bite where you become ill and weak and then okay after the tick is removed, this is many hundred times more serious and painful. I thought CFS was a feeling of tiredness; this is one of about a dozen symptoms. Probably the least of them is the pain level. My symptoms were: first, a red

ring around the bite, which grew larger; then feeling very sick and weak; loud ringing of the ears; body tremors; sore neck; headaches; sore joints; dizziness; inability to think; forgetfulness; confusion; while reading, letters would move all over the page; very heavy or foggy head; poor eyesight; red runny eyes; conjunctivitis; light sensitivity; floaters before eyes; inability to swallow because of damaged mucous membranes; heart palpitations. In fact, this bacteria from the tick bite affects every part of the body. I thought I was going to die and couldn't have cared less if I did. Very few medicos can diagnose this or treat it. I saw, more than once, 10 GPs, including a specialist, and complementary practitioners. I had many blood tests, a brain scan, took vitamins, herbs and antibiotics for 15 months. In my view they all made me sicker and poorer.

By accident my health began to improve. I strained the muscle that stops the food from coming back up. All the fungi from the antibiotics also came up and coated my tongue and mouth and I lost all taste. The GP said to go off antibiotics until the muscle healed. Initially, I became worse, but after about two weeks I started to improve. By this time I was off all medications and supplements and eating nothing but meat and vegetables – organic where possible. After three months my taste is back and I'm feeling good – not 100 percent, but on the way.

There is no doubt in my mind that the antibiotics made me worse and so did a lot of the other stuff I was taking. I have had this disease twice now; the first time I was over it in three months by roughly following the liver cleansing diet. With medical treatment it's been 19 months. The blood test showed a liver damaged by antibiotics.

This disease does exist in the bush. I wish I had been more careful, more aware, and had removed the ticks properly with tweezers and not by any other method. I also wish I had been more careful about trusting the abundant information from practitioners, vitamin companies and the internet.

**Glen Wilkie,**

**71 Delaneys Creek School Rd, DELANEYS CREEK 4514.**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

Regarding making **SOAP FROM LYE** (GR 162): I've made soap a couple of times using caustic soda, but Stefan Greenwood's article reminded me of an account of soap making on a self-sufficient New England farm in the 1860s. It's from *Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, the author of the *Little House on the Prairie* series, and tells of Almanzo Wilder's childhood.

Early spring was soap making time. All the winter's ashes had been saved in a large wooden barrel. Water was poured over them and lye dripped out of the little hole in the bottom. Mother measured the lye into a cauldron and added pork rinds and all the waste pork fat and beef fat that she had saved all through winter (slaughter time was after the first hard frost of winter). The cauldron boiled and the lye and fat made soap. The brown slimy soap was dipped out of the cauldron and stored in wooden tubs. On Saturday nights, everyone took their turn to bathe in the tub in front of the kitchen stove, starting with the youngest. Each person emptied the tub from the one before, refilled it with warm water from the stove, and took a small wooden pannikin of fresh soft soap. Father emptied the final tub on Sunday morning.

I find the books really interesting, with their glimpses of life long ago and insights into the hard work required to live comfortably off the land.

**Lenore Lindsay,**

**323 Philp Ave, FRENCHVILLE 4701.**



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

## Hello to GR and Readers,

Today I'm writing for a bit of help, so let me get straight to the point.

**GARLIC:** I've tried to grow my own over the last few years, but the bulbs never seem to grow any larger than a walnut. Any ideas on how to encourage them to grow larger?



**CHINESE BOK CHOI:** For the first time this year I've grown them from seeds instead of buying them as seedlings. They started out quite promising, but now, four weeks on, they've all flowered without producing anything edible. This has never happened before; could anyone tell me why?

**CAPE GOOSEBERRIES:** They're growing in a container in a sunny position, but almost three years after planting there are still no berries. Does it usually take this long or are they in the wrong spot?

**CAST IRON INDOOR SPIT:** Last year on the ABC there was a documentary on medieval cookery. Featured in the program was a cast iron spit that was used indoors, over the kitchen fireplace. On the program the entire spit seemed to be about 1.2 – 1.5 metres high. It was rotated by means of a pulley system of weights and chains and was used to cook meat, chicken, venison, game and fish. I'm looking for anyone in Australia, preferably Victoria, who might know a place where it could be made by a blacksmith or ironmonger or purchased already as a whole.

Thanks to Stefan Greenwood for the article in GR 162 'Lye and Soap Making'; you put most of my fears to rest.

Oriana,

PO Box 1212, ST ALBANS 3021.

Email: saunameena@hotmail.com

## Dear GR People,

I've found some useful gadgets recently. One is a Swiss Zyliss screw-top lever opener for the strengthwise disadvantaged. It's especially useful for arthritis sufferers, comes in all colours of the rainbow (as do most Swiss things), and adjusts to a large range. I even have one in the garage as an oil filter unscrew (fair dinks mate!). Another helpful device is the good old Chinese-made four-piece gripper pads. Manufacturing cost is maybe five cents, but I paid \$1 for four. Could we make them in Australia? Apparently not! A metre square one of these could help prevent a nasty fall in the bathroom, water drains through it to the grate.

Strolling through the local el cheapo shop is quite an experience. Ideas from all over the world can be as cheap as 50 cents. Two gadgets I couldn't resist were a flyscreen brush – 'Clean any screen in two minutes' sounded too good to miss. It's a revolving bottlebrush thing with a handle. I'll let you know how I go. Another must-have was a **TORNI-K** or pack of two multipurpose rubber band fasteners, tested to 100°C. Use it for emergency repairs to pipes.

Cats and dogs get **EAR MITES** in spring and summer that drive them mad. The mites burrow into their skin and this can lead to infections. I've tried all sorts of ear drops at great expense, but the only real cure I've come across is copious amounts of Vaseline, paraffin oil (from chemist) or cooking oil around the ear (and eyes if they have spread there). These oily substances soon smother the mites and their eggs. Wipe any old oil off before applying any new, and do it twice a day to begin. If there is severe infection, a visit to a vet might be a sensible option, but you would be a bit negligent if you let it get that far. Minor irritations can safely be dealt with by using Betadine antiseptic ointment before the Vaseline (or oil) for a few days until it clears up. If eczema has resulted, a 50:50 mixture of olive oil and lavender oil vigorously shaken in a small bottle to make it mix and then rubbed in can have good results.

Going over the pets with a curry comb or lice comb from chemist shops is a good idea to keep fleas, lice, mites, ticks and so on to a minimum. A lice comb is \$1. Long-haired pets are a problem as all the known beasts can hide away and you wonder why the pet is itchy-scratchy. If the pets spend time inside the house, frequent vacuuming is wise, especially around the edges of the room at the floor-wall joins. A generous sprinkling at these cracks with baby powder will suffocate any hatchlings there, where fleas lay their eggs much of the time.

Mites can also gather around a pet's groin so you have to be quite vigilant. After applying the paraffin oil or similar you will have a fair bit on your hands; this can be rubbed all over the pet's hair, followed by a good combing, similar to what you'd do if you found lice in a human's hair. I'm not too keen on strong flea or tick chemicals, but sometimes it's the only way to break their breeding cycle.

**PAPIER-MÂCHÉ** is a forgotten resource that can be used in hundreds of ways. Recycled newspapers, glue, then a really good coating of paint or epoxy resin if an item is going to live outside, can make just about anything. Years ago in California, a couple made a really sporty pedal car for their son. Some people have made canoes, roofs for gazebos, sculptures, statues, furniture and trendy speaker boxes from it. Rumour has it that the East German-made economy car, the Trabant, had its body made of it, but this may not be entirely truthful. If true, I want one as I'm sick of rust. The type of glue you use will, of course, determine the final strength of the product of your labour, and some experiments are in order before you devote a lot of time. Various methods have been used in the past, but the KISS principal should apply. KISS? Keep it simple superhero. Cloth has also been used in lieu of paper and is stronger.

Roberino,

PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

## Dear GR,

I have a couple of hints for other readers. For many years now I've mixed cooked rice into my cat's and dog's dinner in their tinned food evening meal. It **STRETCHES THE CANNED FOOD** just a little



further, and I recently discovered it takes some of the acid from dogs' urine, so minimising patches that can appear in lawns. A 10-kilogram bag of generic brand rice costs about \$10 and lasts up to four months.

Recently my fridge died beyond repair. I asked my friendly refrigeration man if he had any ideas to get rid of it. He gave me a good idea. It's now in the shed on its back so the door can act as a sealed lid. I store all the bags of grain to keep them fresh and there are no unwanted visitors to indulge!

Melanie,

LOWOOD 4311.

*Hmm, doesn't closing the fridge door with the fridge turned off cause an outbreak of mould, Melanie?*

## Dear GR,

I would just like to let readers know a change in the phone number for John Jamieson, President of the Maremma Sheepdog Social Club of Queensland, from the one mentioned in Livestock Health & Management on page 35 of GR 162. My new phone number is: 07-5465-4003.

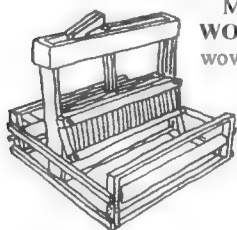
John Jamieson,

President of the Maremma Sheepdog Social Club of Queensland.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**G'Day to Megg's Mob at Grass Roots,**



Many years ago I used to have a small **WOODEN-FRAMED WEAVING LOOM**. It wove wools into scarves and was capable of weaving tartans and similar patterns. Can anyone tell me where such things can be obtained? There are many listed on the internet, but they all seem to be located in the UK or USA. Help, some kind person!

**Howard Young,**

**PO Box 27, KUNUNURRA 6743.**

**Dear Megg & Co,**

I cannot describe the excitement I feel to arrive home and find your familiar envelope poking out of the letter box! Reading of the regulars' adventures really gives me a great lift and serves as a substitute family. I trust that future issues will include appropriate coverage of Suni's wedding.

Steve Fitzgerald's witty real estate review was hilarious and I enjoyed the photos of the fence. There is a creative concrete construction in Ballan that contains assorted pieces of china and utensils categorised thematically. There are paintings to link the story and the owners are always agreeable to close inspections by children and inquisitive passers-by. It too is a work in progress and the front garden is following similar lines most delightfully.

I particularly admire people's innovative suggests for alternative solutions to common problems, but was rather puzzled by Beth's nonrefrigeration experiment. In my childhood, my parents routinely defrosted and turned off the fridge if we were going away for a few days (ensuring that the door was safely propped open and couldn't accidentally slam shut). They saved only a few cents on power and spent far more in terms of time and inconvenience on finishing off or being without particular foodstuffs for a protracted period. Sometimes we throw the baby out with the bath water.

**Rhonda Blade,**

**22 Southern Rd, HEIDELBERG HEIGHTS 3081.**

*Hope you enjoyed the wedding chat in GR 163 and the delightful back cover photo Rhonda.*

**Dear Grass Roots,**

Why is it that no one in Tasmania has been particularly concerned about the ongoing effect of 1080 until it was brought to their attention by someone living thousands of miles away in England? Why is it that no one has put together the over-use of this product with the sudden **DEMISE OF THE TASMANIAN DEVIL**? Use of 1080 kills the wildlife, the natural food chain for the devils, the devils eat the carcasses, take the 1080 into their system and thus the resultant cancerous boils that are decimating their population.

Someone should have the gumption to declare this product a threat to our national heritage. It is a threat that will drive the devils to extinction -- they should already be declared an endangered species! Wake up fellow Tasmanians and voice your objections before it is too late.

**Laurel Dunphey,**

**PO Box 7713, LAUNCESTON 7250.**

**Dear Fellow Grass Roots Folk,**

We are still enjoying the beautiful magazine. We've had wonderful rains down this end of the world. Blessings to farmers and gardeners -- all is green and growing well -- and rest time to my fellow fire-fighters too. Been busy spinning, gardening, grandmothering, and both myself and husband changed our jobs. Two months ago we took long service leave and ventured to Chinchilla, Queensland. Met our dear friends who we contacted through GR over 10 years ago. We have written to each other and made phone calls, then the biggest moment was to meet our friends and their family. We

enjoyed ourselves so much and hope to venture that way again. Then we travelled on to Bundaberg to catch up with more friends -- we camped and the beauty of our Australia is wonderful.

Can any readers help me out with native lime seeds, jubba, Burdikin plum seeds, dragon cactus plant. I love trying to grow seeds and plants. I will cover costs for postage, seeds, plants. Recently I have planted Chinese raisin tree, rose apple, ice cream bean -- all are going well.

Hope Helen Saler receives her parcel from us. It's good to see that others help the needy too, I always think there is someone else who needs what we don't need.

Loved Jan Farrar's story. I'll reread it a number of times and see if it will sink into my head. I never stop, even sleeping I'm planning what to do the next day. I say I'm planning ahead. The vegetable patch is on order for today as well as cleaning the chook shed, that's after my jobs at work. Then I might mow the lawns. What's that: 'no need to rush'? I can take my time can I?

**Joanne & John Yeark,**

**27 Buckett's Way, WARDS RIVER 2422.**

*We hope you're sitting down with a cup of tea and relaxing as you read this mag Joanne. The Rainforest Seed Collectors might be able to help with the seeds you are after. Contact: RSC, Private Mail Bag, Bellingen 2454. Ph: 02-6655-2233.*

**Dear GR,**

Beth Montgomery's article 'Turning the Clock Back', about living 14 days without a fridge, reminded us of our three months in Christchurch, NZ without a fridge, or anything!

We are a couple of travelling, self-sufficient hoboos, who, wanting a bit of adventure and fun, one day about three years ago, decided to buy a couple of one-way tickets to NZ. Our money (we didn't arrive with much) ran out quickly, and we found ourselves in Christchurch homeless, penniless and cold. Unable to find employment due to our 'alternative' looks, and not knowing then about WWOOFing, we had to seek help from the social services.

We managed to rent a shabby house in Christchurch, so for three months (until we found a job) we lived on a dirty floor, cooking food in empty tin cans, living without any appliances or anything. All the house had was an oven. We managed to cook rice in tin cans and make toast on the grill. We had to live on about NZ\$5 a day. Milk would sometimes smell a bit funny come the morning, but when you're starving you don't care. As it was winter, it was way too cold to bathe and we had no heating except for a couple of blankets. We were lucky not to get ill -- there is no Medicare in NZ and we could never have afforded \$50 for a doctor. We eventually found employment in a backpackers' hostel, where we were well-qualified to help out other travelling types.

If any GR readers are pondering a visit to NZ, or if any other modern-day hoboos want to drop us a line, please email us.

**T & M Kelly,**

**Email: violentfemmes@hotmail.com**

**Dear GR Readers,**

Have been an avid reader of your mag for years and always enjoy reading it from cover to cover. I'm hoping some of your readers can give me some tips on how to **GET RID OF MICE**. Since I started keeping chooks the mice have come to take up home as well. Apart from the normal traps (they seem to love peanut butter or hazelnut spread), does anyone know of any other ways to get rid of these pesky little critters? I'll give anything a go. Thanks in advance for any help.



**Gary Larkin,**

**PO Box 543, PENRITH 2747.**

**Email: oz\_47otter@iprimus.com.au**



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

## Dear Grass Roots,

I just finished reading the latest issue (GR 162) and as always it's a wonderful read, thank you for the time and effort that goes in to each issue.

Some time ago I read about a couple who were making their way around eastern Australia with camels and horses. I wonder how they are going. If anyone knows, it would be nice to hear.

I am also wondering what you will do after the articles on the different breeds of sheep as I have enjoyed reading them. When I was a child we had a Merino cross (black) ram and Dorset Horn ewes. We used them as yard and paddock mowers and fertilisers and to provide us with meat, but the younger brothers and sister were never to know that (oops, sorry, they do now). The wool was given to various people for their use.

We also had a goat, which was a mower only, except when he would chase Mum around the yard or hassle the chooks for their feed. We had chooks, ducks and other animals that we would end up with when the rest of the family didn't want them anymore.

Look forward to the next issue, can't wait. A question for readers: Do they read from one cover to the other, or do they read what interests them first and then go back through the magazine?

Scotty,

PO Box 9255, Wynnum Plaza, WYNNUM WEST 4178.

## Dear Grass Roots Readers,

I am looking for some **HOMEMADE WINE RECIPES**. I have made rhubarb wine with great success. I have heard of blackberry and raspberry wines, but cannot find any recipes. I have also heard of pumpkin whisky. If anyone can help it would be greatly appreciated.



A Reynolds,

764 Upper Natone Rd, UPPER NATONE 7321.

*Past issues of GR have had many articles on wine making. Look at GRs 101, 102, 103, 105, 112, 116, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 132, 134.*

## Giddy GR,

Thank you for publishing our letter and taking the time to put to rest some of the soap making myths. I have had success with making soap with caustic soda and am happy to keep using it, I was just hoping that the wood ash would be as easy to use and add a different dimension to the process. Please pass on our sincerest thanks to Stefan Greenwood, he did a really good job of writing the article and answering our question.

We have already received mail answering our other questions, and the fella (I have misplaced his name) from Easy Knead was very prompt in posting me a pamphlet, from which I will be ordering.

Jason, Jodie and Family,

110 Duncan St, BRAIDWOOD 2622.

## Dear Grass Roots,

Hi everyone. I am happily enjoying the peace and harmony of life in the country – Victoria's north-east – on 30 acres of bush, which I share with lots of animals, both domestic and wild. I'm currently seeking ideas for lining my tin shed. Has anyone used the foil batts advertised in GR? Do they cause health problems?

For people interested in **KEEPING DAIRY GOATS**, I have a lifetime of experience and am happy to offer advice or help and often have quality animals for sale.

My gardens and property are organic, though the shortage of water has altered some of my garden ideas.

To the people wanting to escape the rat race and make the move to the country, don't give up on your dreams, but do seek advice from those who have the experience behind them. It can be difficult at times and tackling a lot of jobs can be a lot easier with the help of a partner, but being on your own is not all bad and there

are ways of improvising to do different jobs – just recognise what you are unable to do.

Is the **BARTER SYSTEM** still alive? I have a few jobs that I need help with.

Lorna,

RMB 6482, EVERTON UPPER 3678.

Email: UtopianLady46@yahoo.com

## Dear Grass Roots,

I am hoping a reader can give me the recipe for how to make **NATTO KINASE**. I believe it is made from soya beans and has health benefits for osteoporosis, diabetes and poor circulation and can replace prescription blood thinners, but of course only after consultation with a health practitioner. My information comes from a health science magazine, but it doesn't provide how to make it.

M Leslie,

14 Melaleuca Dr, LAMB ISLAND 4184.

## Dear GRs,

After reading an article on **KEFIR** in an old GR I tried to get some through the local health food shops, none of which could get any in south-western Australia. If anyone can help me obtain this, can they please write to me?

Steven Smith,

Twin Gully Farm, NORTHCLIFFE 6262.

Ph: 08-9776-6132.

## Dear Megg,

I've enclosed a piece about dogs. Don't know who wrote it, but I think it should be given to all new owners.

I know all shires have trouble with dumped and straying dogs. I picked one up three years ago. It looked like a dingo, but turned out to be a Basenji cross. He was a frightened fellow, but now he is so happy. He is a very gentle quiet dog. My John said: 'That dog has not got a mean bone in his body'. The previous owners are the losers.

## DOG'S PLEA

*Trust me kindly, my beloved friend, for no heart in all the word is more grateful for kindness than the loving heart of me.*

*Do not break my spirit with a stick, for though I should lick your hand between blows, your patience and understanding will more quickly teach me the things you would have me learn.*

*Speak to me often, for your voice is the world's sweetest music, as you must know by the fierce wagging of my tail when your foot-step falls upon my waiting ear.*

*Please take me inside when it is cold and wet, for I am a domesticated animal, no longer accustomed to the bitter elements.*

*I ask no greater glory than the privilege of sitting at your feet beside the hearth.*

*Keep my pan filled with fresh water, for I cannot tell you when I suffer thirst.*

*Feed me clean food that I may stay well, to romp and play and do your bidding, to walk by your side, and stand ready, willing and able to protect you.*

*And, my friend, when I am very old, and I no longer enjoy good health, hearing and sight, do not make heroic efforts to keep me going, I am not having any fun.*

*Please see that my trusting life is taken gently.*

*I shall leave this earth knowing with the last breath I draw that my fate was always safest in your hands.*

Mary Mathews,

PO Box 115, MUNDIJONG 6123.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear GR,**

For anyone out there having **PROBLEMS WITH COCK-ROACHES**: I mixed up one part plaster of paris with one part caster sugar. They eat it, then have a drink and it sets in their guts. I was getting quite infested here until I tried this bait and have hardly seen one since.

I am in my final year of teacher training, and am thinking that the **TOWN OF 1770**, Queensland, or its neighbour **AGNES WATERS** would be a fine place to live next year. Would someone from that area write to me and let me know the good points (and any not so good) of a move to that area? I am quite happy to drive the hour or so into Bundaberg for work. I am so looking forward to getting back to the country.

I have four children, two at high school, one at primary and one goes to a special school – he has autism. So any information on schools in the area would be great. We fell in love with that beautiful area many years ago when we went on holidays. What's the rental situation like? Or should I have the money to buy before I come up there? The deposit for a house is going to take us a year or so to raise. Hoping to hear from you.

**Lisa Cooper,**  
56 Mahogany Cres, GATESHEAD 2290.

**Dear GR,**

I have a five-hectare **BUSH BLOCK** that lies 300 kilometres east of Perth and I am looking for **SOMEONE TO SHARE IT WITH ME**. I am not a permanent resident as I alternate between the city and my piece of tranquillity. It is a bush block and has no frills, but abundant peace and quiet.

There is scheme water but no electricity, the nearest town is eight kilometres away and is a small wheat-belt community of approximately 300 people. On two sides it is surrounded by salt lake, the other two consist of a disused railway line and a field owned by my neighbour (two kilometres away).

The property consists of a hut (my palace), a large open shed and a 40' sea container, which is used as storage. There is plenty of potential and I have so far planted 200 trees and shrubs and will be doing the same this year come June. I am not looking for a temporary caretaker, but rather someone very long term, permanent maybe, who will be part of the development of this land.

For your info, I am a male in my 57th year, have a wonderful partner in Perth, love the bush and hate the city.

**Derek Eagles,**  
PO Box 22, KONDININ 6367.

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I wrote a recent letter to GR, in it was a thank-you to GR for still being here after 30 years. I spoke of the retreat on which I live with all my 100 nonhuman friends, a retreat devoted to the womyn-spirit walk of the goddess pathway. The letter was published and what an astounding contact it has been. People have rung, written and emailed.

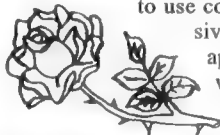
To the wonderful older womyn who rang and left a message, thank you. I would have returned your call, but you left no name or number just a heart-filled message that is still in my heart. Thank you GR for the opportunity through readers' letters for the fabulous contact and new friends. To all those who contacted me, you are all a part of the magic of life and living, reaching out and truly being a part of a large and wide community. I thank you for your beautiful selves – you have brought a richness into my life that keeps me going in this dream and vision and creativity of this special place. I feel very Goddess blessed and I give a Gypsy blessing to you all.

**Catherine Johns,**  
'Artemis', RSD 629, MANNUM 5238.

**Dear Grass Roots Readers,**

I am a new reader of this absolutely wonderful magazine and now I can't wait for the next issue. The Feedback pages are my favourite, one can learn so much.

I am hoping to get some help for my 60 **SICK ROSES**. I hate to use commercial poisons, plus they are too expensive, so if anyone knows how to control the aphids and diseases like black spot and rust I would be most grateful.



**Nada Knez,**  
Sorrento Rd, DALVEEN 4374.

**Hello Grass Roots & Readers,**

I am a 39 year-old male who is looking for information on **COMMUNITIES** where I can live and work in return for food and accommodation, or pay some money towards food and accommodation instead of paying thousands of dollars to buy some land and a house. Also, I would like to write or email to people who are not only interested in the alternative communities lifestyles but alternative music, food and health as well.

**Kenneth Vaughan,**  
PO Box 5109, WEST END 4101.

**Dear Editor,**

I have a problem in that my metabolism is working very, very slowly ever since I had radiotherapy on my brain tumours. My doctor informs me that there is medication I can take to make my metabolism work somewhat faster, but they are chemicals and I would have to take them for the rest of my life. For me this is not an option. Therefore, I am wondering if perhaps some readers would know of a natural way to **IMPROVE MY METABOLISM**.

**Maria Kanas,**  
121 Railway Tce, ASCOT PARK 5043.

**Dear Readers,**

Do you **LIVE ALONE BUT WOULD PREFER NOT TO?** I think you agree with me that there are too many lonely people around because almost every second marriage ends up in divorce and there is a large Australian migrant population with family support overseas. There are at least some options for people after 55, but for the working, active 50 – 55 year age group there is nothing around.

But there is an option! To build or buy and then renovate with others in such a way that you have a self-contained apartment (which could be legally sold) and create an alternative family-like situation, but maintain privacy at the same time. Initial saving, ongoing saving; partial security in case of sickness or when on holiday is a very important aspect as well. It could be ideal for active, friendly people over 40, with a healthy lifestyle and attitude who would like to create a little extended family-like group of people who have something in common.

Are you one of them? If you would like to find out more then ring.

**Marion Northcott,**  
33A The Rampart, CASTLECRAIG 2068.  
Ph: 02-9967-8067.

**Dear Grass Roots,**

Hi, I am an expectant mother living in the city, but hoping to achieve as many simple, natural organic practices as possible for when baby arrives. One practice I am seeking advice with is nappies; to be precise, **CLEANING NAPPIES**. I am wondering if any readers know of good products, recipes or methods for cleaning nappies properly that don't involve strong commercial bleach or disinfectant. I'd like to be able to use the leftover water on the garden safely.

**Anthea Goff,**  
1/9 Robsons Rd, KEIRAVILLE 2500.

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Feedback,

I enjoy reading GR and am **A RELATIVELY NEW READER**. While reading the articles is interesting, it's very interesting to read the Feedback section, an open forum where like-minded people share experiences, suggestions and true friendship with others, people whose lives may not otherwise cross. I find particular interest in people who follow an alternative lifestyle, from Gypsy wanderers to living a self-sufficient, relaxed existence.

Being a city person, I envy these people who have the bush as their backyard and a less stressful life than city living. I do escape from the city to enjoy the national parks, beaches and bays, but that is not the same as the lifestyle the country has to offer. My reason for writing is to see if there are people who would like to **SHARE THEIR LIFESTYLE, EVEN ON AN EXCHANGE BASIS**. Sometimes people do like a visit to the city, don't they? I would also be interested in making new friends via mail: any age, couples, singles, just open, honest people from any part of Australia. Keep up the good work and great magazine.

Michael Dane,  
PO Box 36, BLAKEHURST 2221.

Dear GR Readers,

I am a warm, gentle woman, late 40s, who is tired of the hustle and bustle of traditional life. I am seeking to move to an **ALTER-NATIVE COMMUNITY** where life is not so hectic. I have some experience in massage and aromatherapy, but would like to learn further alternative therapies. My other interests include craft and jewellery making – these I would love to learn. My philosophy is based on honest, open relationships and a burgeoning interest in Tantric teaching. I am a qualified teacher and would be happy to be involved in teaching children at home. I look forward to hearing from you.

Harmony Spencer,  
36A Saunders St, POINT VERNON 4655.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

It has been a few years since my last letter when we were establishing our 'little' nursery. Since then it has grown and prospered and we are now doing an average of four markets a month. Met some beautiful people through trees and plants. Often we knock on people's doors asking for seeds or cuttings from their yards when we see something good. We are always **LOOKING FOR SEEDS** (all kinds) and are desperately short on tropical fruits. Does anyone have granadilla soursop, canistel, cashew, carob, mamey sapote, Chinese raisin, abiu, kei apple, rollinia, plum pine, caimito, black sapote etc? We would love to hear from you.

Can pay a small fee for seeds and postage or trade trees or other seeds you might be looking for. Also, Margaret, if you are reading this: I have lost your address and still have the vanilla bean for you!

Monica,  
500 Moolboolaman Rd, GIN GIN  
4671.

Dear GR,

I've just discovered your fantastic publication and am most impressed and will be a regular reader now. As my partner (a footy fanatic) is at the footy all day I'd planned a video, but GR has consumed my afternoon with interest – thank you!

I am 63, a disabled pensioner, dependent on a walker and take daily walks to keep as fit as possible. With several penpals I share interests such as gardening, craft, reading and current affairs and enjoy life. My priority is gardening and I stretch my pension to the limit to cater for the care and purchase of unusual plants, particularly bromeliads. I'd love to hear from other GR readers who are

**KEEN GARDENERS** and would welcome recipes for economical home produce. I'm a novice, but find GR very educational.

Mary Symes,  
2/23 Thomas St, BENALLA 3672.

Hi at Grass Roots,

I thought I'd write you about finding a family to adopt my **FOWLER'S VACOLA PRESERVING KIT**. Where I'm living now, I see no foreseeable future for it with me, yet refuse to toss it. It would be of great use to the right family, I'm sure. There's over 60 glass jars, lots of lids, the Fowler's book and instructions, thermometer etc. It's a stove-top set up. There's five boxes weighing about 10 kilograms each. I live in Wollongong NSW, so would only expect a receiver to cover shipping cost.



Marianne,  
Ph: 0418-241-979,  
Email: originality60@hotmail.com

Dear Megg & Co,

I still enjoy *Grass Roots*, although I haven't written for about two years. I had a bad year and was in and out of hospital last year, so I sold my home and now live in this retirement home, which is very nice. I am 91 years old.

I was pleased to hear Suni and Marcel got engaged. The engagement party sounded nice and I liked the decorations of wheat, rose petals and pink cream in the cakes. I hope to see some wedding photos next *Grass Roots*.

Turkey crumble has something in it to prevent **BLACKHEAD IN TURKEYS**, have you tried that? Also, I wonder if it was a water rat that caused the fowls to die that a lady wrote about. They burrow under wire netting and climb onto the roost and fasten onto chooks' back quarters and suck the blood out. The fowl falls down and has a white comb. A water rat we caught was the size of two big common rats and had a long bushy tail.

Tahiti,  
'The Court', KYOGLE 2474.

Perhaps your 'water rat' was a brush-tailed phascogale – sounds like it to us. Hope you enjoyed the wedding photos in GR 163.

Dear GR & Readers,

This is a cry for help! My wife and I are seeking a **CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE** as we currently live in the dense, congested city of Sydney, but are country people at heart. We seek clean fresh air, space to roam and a sky that sparkles at night. With three small kids, we are after a town that promotes a sense of community. We enjoy walks in the bush, picnicking, self-sufficiency and basically the grassroots lifestyle, and wish to associate with people who share these interests.

We are after some land to call our own with an **ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY HOUSE**. Areas of interest are southern NSW, Victoria or Tasmania. Employment is essential and I have skills in training, management and maintenance of aircraft. I am adaptable and a hard worker with a keen focus on technical environments. We are after your advice on how you made the change and features of your town. Your help on this is most appreciated and we look forward to your correspondence.

L Vossen,  
RUSE 2560.  
Email: jlenzvossen@optusnet.com.au

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.



# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Megg, Mary, Sue & Crew,**

After reading Gumnut Gossip I had to write about my hoarding and recycling. After doing a goal setting course recently I've been motivated to declutter my cupboards and craft supply boxes and to increase the variety of things I make for my market stall, also to do more home brew, homemade yoghurt and other GR activities and I'm really getting there – I've achieved quite a few goals already. Even the enclosed article was on the list, so that's another one ticked off.

A friend of mine buys fabric from op shops and makes shopping bags out of it; a great idea on two fronts – the fabric is recycled and fewer plastic bags get used.

I've been busy with the boys, my ladies lunch group (which includes several men, husbands of some of 'the girls'), my craft group; I've got to organise an op-shopping tour, my crafts and much more.

Things are going well here, I've got my savings account on the go, so the deposit is growing nicely, and eventually, in the not too distant future, I'll be looking at blocks of land.

Well, on that note I'm off to straighten out some wool I unravelled from a scarf so I can turn it into gloves and toys, then there's an old beanie that's destined to become crocheted blanket squares. Love to the newlyweds, and a lifetime of happiness to them and all the rest of you.

**Vicki Judd,  
59 Beresford Dr, BORONIA 3155.**

**Hello GR Readers,**

Does anyone know how to make **APPLE OR PEAR CONCENTRATE**? I have been told it's boiled down apple juice, but I don't know how to make it. The concentrate is meant to turn out like a syrup and is used in sweet recipes.

Also, does anyone have any **VEGAN OR VEGETARIAN RECIPES** for muffins, cookies, slices or cakes? I am after healthy, low-fat and tasty ones, including recipes using eggs and dairy products.



I am a young gardener trying to grow fruit trees organically in containers. Can anyone share their tips to help me be a successful **CONTAINER GARDENER**?

**Kylie,  
PO Box 22, BACCHUS MARSH 3340.**

*Kylie, the spring 2000 issue of 'Greenhouse Living' magazine had a very useful article on growing fruit trees in containers. Back copies are still available for \$5 including postage.*

**Dear GR Readers,**

I am a 16-year-old girl who is interested in beginning a library of **ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SEEDS**. With multinational companies monopolising so many products and industries, I believe it is very important to begin my store before all commercial seeds are genetically modified, making the seeds of these plants sterile. If any reader would be kind enough to send me any information regarding this, specifically information about how best to store the seeds, or if you would like to donate to my collection, it would be much appreciated.

**Claire Camilleri,  
349 Eastbourne Rd, ROSEBUD WEST 3940.**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I recall reading about a lady going without her refrigerator in the winter. Maybe this information will interest her and others.

It is Mohammed Bah Abba's **POT-IN-POT INVENTION**. In northern Nigeria, where Mohammed is from, over 90 percent of the villages have no electricity. His invention, which he won a Rolex Award for (and \$100,000), is a refrigerator that runs with-

out electricity. Here's how it works. You take a smaller pot and put it inside a larger pot. Fill the space in between them with wet sand and cover the top with a wet cloth. When the water evaporates, it pulls the heat out with it, making the inside cold. It's a natural, cheap, easy-to-make refrigerator. So, instead of perishable foods rotting after only three days, they can last up to three weeks. Obviously, this has the potential to change their lives. And it already has; there are more girls attending school, for example, as their families no longer need them to sell food in the market.

**Kate Van Uden,  
YEPPON 4003.**

*Stand by, all. We have an article that evaluates this method coming up in a future GR edition.*

**G'day Mary,**

**CATTLE STATIONS** (at least the ones I choose) are vast places with miles of open grazing land and endless horizons that reach into never-ending distance. Here there are 58,000 head of cattle, there are hills, there are creeks, rivers and billabongs, there are unlimited views of the Lawn Hill National Park (at least, the range which forms the gorge). At the same time there are the far-reaching grasslands, where the cattle live, mostly unseen, until helicopters and ringers on motorbikes and horses muster them into the yards.

The work hours are long: I rise at 4.30am and finish my day at 9pm. We have TV, videos and a power generator that goes 24 hours a day. I cook plain meat and three vegies 2000 different ways. I make biscuits and cakes and old-fashioned puddings. I sweep and mop floors and try to make gardens, I am 62 years old and have lived this way for 23 years of my life, no newspapers or radios.

I tried to retire to Woombye, but found many things that would be simple to most people, like going to the supermarket, to be a complete culture shock. I found traffic and people everywhere and, worst of all, I would look with yearning and an ache in my heart and wonder what the cattle were doing. So in the end I just packed and came back 'home'. Four years later I am still here and I wonder if I will ever leave! Sometimes I think it would be so nice for a small group of people to get together and buy a block of land and just go and live there and share it and life, with the only rule being to have respect for each other and each other's lifestyle. Anyways, you asked why I left Woombye: I missed the outback is the answer.

**Cookie,**

**Lawn Hill Station, PO Box 1819, MOUNT ISA 4825.**

**Dear Megg & Readers,**

I received GR 163 yesterday and as usual felt very tempted to sit down and read it right through. I just had to write and say: what a lovely photo of Suni and Marcel in their wedding finery. Your dress is beautiful and so different Suni; I think it is the first floral one I have seen. It must have been a very happy day for you all. I also enjoyed the article by Robert Millet of Devonport about gardening. How right he is that we only see half of the interesting things that are going on when we walk in the garden. My own garden is limited to pots now, on account of arthritis, but recently I sat and watched some ants carrying a dead blowfly away to their nest. Good too to see a letter from the Stock Camp Cook. I had a letter returned from his last address, so perhaps I shall try again.

To anyone who is trying to stop using chemicals in the house, I recommend an excellent little book called *Chemical Free Home* by Robin Stewart. It has hundreds of really useful hints and is very interesting to read. May we have *Grass Roots* for a very long time.

**Barbara Jenkins,  
19 Barnett Crescent, BRIDPORT 7262.**





# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

Can someone please answer this question? I have three lovely brown hens (New Hampshire, I think), which lay lovely brown eggs, but when I boil the eggs I find that the shell is almost impossible to remove without removing the egg white as well. Also, the egg white becomes grainy, rather than smooth in texture. I'm very partial to **HARD-BOILED EGGS**, but the texture is always a disappointment, and I can't use them for stuffed eggs because they look so ragged. Any solution to my problem?



**Gunta Hicks,**

**46 Cumberland Ave, CUMBERLAND PARK 5041.**

*Gunta, try standing your eggs, once cooked, in cold water for about 10 minutes to make the shells easier to remove. It's also best to hard-boil eggs that are at least a few days old, not just-laid ones. Good luck. Look out for the next issue with some super egg recipes.*

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I am writing to see if anyone can help me with the recipe for **BREAD YEAST** made from boiled **POTATO WATER** and raisins. As I remember, it was fed for a number of days, with what I do not know, to form the yeast. It was used by my late mother-in-law who made wonderful bread.

**Marlene Hamilton,**

**326 North Boundary Rd, HAMILTON 3300.**

**Dear Grass Roots Friends,**

I am writing to get in touch with anyone in the Sydney area who owns a **WATER IONISER** who would sell the water to me.

Also, please, please, please, I would like the recipe for a type of dough, similar to a **PIZZA BASE** but made with **BESAN** (chick-pea) flour. It's an Italian or possibly more precisely, Sardinian, food that they sell in pizza shops. It has no topping and is truly delicious!

**Melinda King,**

**15 Delaigh Ave, NORTH CURL CURL 2099.**

**Dear GRs,**

I heard this story on the ABC midnight radio talkback show. The caller had been a young jackeroo on a half-million-acre cattle station in northern WA. It was very, very hot and the lads built just the outline of a rough timber open shed with a more solid iron or bark roof. They then stuffed all the open wall spaces with bundles of spinifex and arranged for the bore water to run continuously onto the roof and down the sides. Voila, an evaporative air conditioner in which to have lunch and spell out for a while.

**Marjorie Boyle,**

**Unit 67 Village Life, 66 Ishmael Rd, CAIRNS 4870.**

**Dear GRs,**

In answer to Lori Mansfield's letter (GR 163) on self-sufficiency, I believe complete self-sufficiency is theoretically achievable, but from a practical point undesirable for most folk nowadays. However, I do believe everyone should attempt to grow at least some of the family's needs. This is, of course, a long, long way from self-sufficiency, so it may be pertinent here to question what and **HOW MUCH SELF-SUFFICIENCY THE AVERAGE FAMILY NEEDS** before it lapses into a kind of self-imposed slavery or, at the very least, drudgery. With enough land one could, theoretically, rear the family's milk and meat requirements, butcher and freeze it, bake bread, bottle preserves, spin and weave cloth, repair footwear, garden, crop farm, brew, generate your own energy, practise traditional crafts and so on. This is real self-sufficiency.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

I suggest that few folk nowadays would even consider the possibility; the vast majority don't want to do any of these activities, hence the astonishing popularity of TV programs featuring low-maintenance gardens, barbecue and entertainment areas and water features. They obviously did their research well in finding out what folk want in their lifestyles. I believe this is a very sad state of affairs, but it's a fact of life in the new millennium. So yes, my letter on **HOW MUCH LAND IS REQUIRED FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY** was meant for the suburbs; after all, it's where most people live. A thousand square metres or the old quarter-acre block is an enviable slice of land, especially to migrants from countries where often they had little or no gardens to speak of. A lot can be grown on such an area. The UK governments during both WWI and WWII calculated that an area of 250 square metres was sufficient to grow the family's vegies. These were, and are still, known as allotments, and every citizen is entitled to one, even today. Much more surprising are the six raised beds at the Hobart Royal Botanic Gardens. These six beds, working on a six-year rotation, total just 48 square metres, enough these days for the average family's vegie patches. These beds would easily fit into most backyards, even with the smaller lots. The average family is still two adults and 1.7 children and, whether you have a suburban lot or a country acreage, there is no point in producing more than you need, except perhaps a small surplus to give to an elderly or handicapped neighbour.

Many older readers will remember the TV series 'The Good Life'. Well, the BBC intends to do a reality series on a group of folk who will attempt to do what the Goode's did and live off the land. In a recent interview with Richard Briers, one of the stars of the series, he felt that the contestants were completely bonkers to even attempt it, however, he will treat the winners to a nice restaurant meal!

Finally, it's all a question of balance, on how much or how little self-sufficiency one can fit into the chosen lifestyle. This is aimed mainly at suburbanites. For those who dream of that bit of arcadia and have the necessary vision, vitality, and sense of purpose, by all means go ahead. I really do wish you good luck and good fortune in your endeavours to achieve that good life.

**Alan Stewart,**

**12 Weymouth Pl, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.**

**Dear Grass Roots Readers,**

Can anyone help me? I recently went to get my book for a **MINT SAUCE RECIPE** and lo and behold, it's gone. I think it was given away in a clean-up I had a while ago. The sauce was the same style as the bought stuff only thicker and tastier, but not a jelly. I would appreciate it if you have a recipe that you would be willing to share or the name of a book that I could borrow from the library, or buy if not too expensive. Many thanks in anticipation.



**Margaret Theobald,**

**23 Coonanga Ave, BUDGEWOI 2262.**

**Email: catscastle@bigpond.com**

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I am just writing to thank you all for a wonderful magazine.

I made a version of the crochet hat in GR 157. Thanks Sharon for a wonderfully simple way to make a hat. I entered my hat into the Coonabarabran Show and was placed second. I was very surprised as my hat is quite 'unique' one could say!

All the info in your mag really helps me and my little family with ideas for our small farm. As we are just starting out with minimal funds available, all advice is great. Thanks heaps.

**Alie Stringer,**

**'Rosehill', COONABARABRAN 2357.**

# FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

**Dear Grass Roots,**

We have a very large dam on the property we moved to four months ago. It had been dry for about six years because of drought and is now full, but looks dirty and the **WATER IS A BIT SMELLY**. Does anyone have any hints to clean it up?

**Carmel Paul,**  
8 Jahn Drv, GLENORE GROVE 4342.

**Dear Grass Roots,**

After a recent move my treasured herb book is missing. If anyone has a copy of **'YE OLDE HERB BOOK'** (the author I have no idea), I would dearly like to get a copy. There are original scripts of old English herb remedies, potpourri and much more. Many thanks.



**Jeanette Bickley,**  
Farm 218, COLEAMBALLY 2707.

**Dear GR Readers,**

I'm a recent convert to GR, although the dream of an alternative, green lifestyle has been in my heart and head for a little while now. I've gone from a rather mainstream life towards one that becomes progressively more independent and eco-friendly. I hope soon to stop renting and move myself and my daughter onto our own place – very exciting, I assure you.

As well as a GR lifestyle, I want to **HOME SCHOOL** my daughter – she is just about three now – but don't know who to contact. I would really like to hear from people who have home schooled, especially with regards to matching state education requirements (regardless of where you live) and socialising with other families and children. I have the support of my family in doing this, but not my ex, and I want to assure him our daughter will not be disadvantaged in any way. I will be contacting the Education Department, but also need real experiences.

Megg, you all do such wonderful work at GR! Congratulations to Suni and Marcie (don't they look so happy!), and commiserations for Maria, a great friend, I know.

**Naomi Callaghan,**  
27 Pooles Rd, VILLENEUVE 4514.

**Dear Grass Roots & Co,**

My name is Chiquita and I am 18. My partner (Michael, also 18) got tired of our small home town, so we moved out and started working for a place of our own. On discovering the alternative lifestyle we decided that this was the way for us. However, having made this decision, we would really love to meet some **OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE** like ourselves to share ideas and friendship with. The advice, information, contacts, ideas and general knowhow of older readers would also be welcomed. We are both pretty hard-working and easy-going, but Michael is the practical salt-of-the-earth type. He is always fixing and fiddling with stuff, interested in permaculture, alternative power, self-sufficiency and building things. I, on the other hand, am a friendly, chatterbox ideas person, forever having 'light bulb' moments. My interests are herbalism, gardening, acupuncture, deep ecology, humanitarian issues, activism and spiritualism. I would really love to hear from you if you are interested in any or all of the above subjects. I promise to reply to all letters and Michael promises to make sure I actually post them (oh the joys of teamwork!).

**Chiquita Wright,**  
PO Box 623, COOKTOWN 4895.

**Dear Readers of Grass Roots,**

We have been reading *Grass Roots* from almost the beginning, and we live in a humble home in a woodland setting in Aberdeen, Devonport, Tasmania. We have learnt a lot from GR and we are truly grateful; no other magazine offers such useful information or

is so warm to read and to keep as a treasure to reflect back upon. My name is Adrian and my wife's name is Dianne and we are content with life, although we're struggling to make ends meet (as most) as I am on a disability pension. I have been going to college for the past three years studying English literature, poetry, creative writing and mathematics. I have done well with maths and I am considering looking into courses to become a part-time maths tutor, which is something I am able to do with my limitations. I also write poetry, essays and creative writing for pleasure and have had a number of my pieces in the college magazine over the last couple of years. If anyone is interested in reading some of my poetry, please contact me. I am interested in selling my writings to supplement my income.

**Adrian Avenell,**  
87 Melrose Rd, ABERDEEN 7310.  
Ph: 03-6427-2978.

**Dear Megg & all at Grass Roots,**

I have been a reader since issue 15 and still have the *Early Years*. I lost some to a leaky ceiling and made the mistake of lending some – never to be seen again. When it comes to GR mags, I think you need to live by the old motto 'Never a borrower or a lender be'.

I actually made issue 163 last for two days – amazing! It is school holidays here in Tasmania and my daughter and I have been busy doing chores and visiting, otherwise I just leave everything and sit and read. One day every two months to just sit isn't too bad though.

Over the years I have gained so much from GR – all the hints, tips, ideas and articles. Some things I have tried, other ideas might come in handy one day.

We have **OUR OWN VEGIES, FRUIT, EGGS** all year round. I preserve with a Vacola outfit and make jam, pickles, sauce and relish. The only fruits we buy are tropical – bananas and pineapples etc, which will not tolerate our climate.

We have just eaten our last tomato. I hate to have to buy tomatoes. There is no comparison to the sweet, tasty, juicy fruit we grow. I need to heat a hothouse all year round.

Perhaps that could be a project to think about.  
Thank you for a great magazine.



**Jeanette Emery,**  
PO Box 42, CAMPBELLTOWN 7210.  
Email: jremery@bigpond.com

**Dear Grass Roots,**

I have recently revamped my back garden in a permaculture, companion plant, organic way. Quite soon after clearing all the weeds and planting the vegie beds with a variety of seedlings I noticed a few **EUROPEAN WASPS** on the radishes and cauliflowers. At first I thought it was the smell, then noticed they were after water. I have no idea where the nest is as they fly up very high and head off in the direction of a park. I want to know if there are any **PLANTS THAT CAN BE GROWN TO DETER THEM**. Or is there any other deterrent, seeing as the nest is not on my property?

**Helen Bird,**  
22 Parkside Blvd, CARRUM 3197.

**Hi Everyone at Grass Roots,**

Although I do not subscribe to your magazine, I have been buying it through the book shop for many, many years. Can anyone help me purchase the copies I have missing from my awesome collection? I need only 13 back issues, then I have them all to date! I need issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 62, 65, 79, 90, 93, 96 and 141 (don't know I missed that one). Please let me know the cost and postage included from Australia to New Zealand. Hoping you can help.

**Ann Rogers,**  
RD5, Tapu, Thames Coast, NEW ZEALAND.

*Ann, issues 62, 65, 79, 90, 93, 96 and 141 are all still available from us, the earlier ones are out of print. See pricing on page 82.*

# That Faint Smell Of Perfume

by June Birkett, Crystal Creek, NSW.

A pungent smell floated on the air as a young woman walked past me on the street. Instantly my mind went back to another time when women wore a faint hint of perfume that clung to their clothes, self or hair. I would like to share some of the tips that mothers passed on to their daughters during my youth.

Clothing always smells fresh if stored with mint. Place it into drawers where its sweet smell permeates clothes. Mint also keeps moths from woollens.

Gardenia heads are good to pop into underwear drawers, as the fragrant smell of the gardenia leaves a lingering scent in the fabric. The gardenia heads should be replaced every three months or so. If you have the bush, store as many dried heads as possible in an airtight container and replenish regularly.

Of course, lavender is the most

favoured of all old perfumes. Lavender bushes are hardy to grow, last a long time, and the flowers can be stored with clothing, underwear, sheets, or anything else you choose. In the past women almost always carried the faint hint of lavender about them.

Perfumed rose petals can be stored with clothing or linen. Place dried petals in an airtight container for later use.

I stored my linen with orange blossom, one of my favourite scents, before I was married. It leaves a wonderful perfume on clothing and nightwear.

Today, when we have so many strong commercial perfumes, we tend to forget the delicate old-fashioned fragrances. Plant a red magnolia tree outside the bedroom window and the breeze will fill the bedroom with fragrance, especially during the cool of the night.

The scents of picked roses, violets,

lavender and gardenia will perfume the home as well as add colour and beauty to the living space, often lifting a sick or depressed one's spirits. Mint, parsley or herbs add colour and flavour to food. Lemons, oranges and grapefruits add colour to a table setting when placed in bowls. Cut lemon gives a sweet fresh smell to a bathroom, and herbs or fruit placed in the laundry or bathroom take away unpleasant smells and leave a fresh lingering scent.

Lily of the valley, lilies and honeysuckle have strong but magnificent perfumes. Best to check no one in the home has an allergy to them before placing them in vases or drawers.

Nature provides the best perfumes of all and they are less likely to cause the adverse reactions that are increasingly being experienced from exposure to volatile manufactured perfumes. 🌿

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# Go A Feijoa

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

Feijoa (*Feijoa sellowana*), commonly known as pineapple guava, is an evergreen tall shrub or small tree that grows to about 4.5 metres in the subtropics and is smaller in temperate areas. It is sometimes confused with the cherry or strawberry guava (*Psidium littorale*), a different genus altogether. Originally native to subtropical Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, feijoas will thrive in full sun in temperate climates as long as they are protected from frosts in their first years. More mature bushes can withstand frosts down to -8°C.

Fertile, well-drained garden soil with adequate water retention is best, but feijoas can thrive in dry areas if watered and mulched. A good quality soft mulch such as mown grass, lucerne hay or pea straw over newspapers will inhibit weeds and protect fallen fruit. Avoid cultivation near shrubs because of shallow roots. We fertilise just before spring growth and also in summer when fruit is set.

The white flowers with bright red stamens, combined with bluish-green leathery leaves with silvery undersides, make the feijoa a showy ornamental shrub. Flower petals are edible and very sweet.

Their bushy growth habit, toleration for light pruning and wind hardiness make feijoas ideal to plant as an attractive fruiting hedge. Our orchard plantings are five metres apart, but hedge shrubs can be as little as two metres apart.

The fruits develop in late summer through to early winter and fall to the ground when ready, which is why a soft mulch is so important. Store fruit inside in a cool spot, not the refrigerator, to further soften and develop fragrance.

## VARIETIES TO TRY

Most feijoas available in Australia are New Zealand- or Californian-bred varieties. The two most commonly available varieties are Mammoth and

Triumph. Mammoth produces dull green, egg-shaped fruit with a thick skin and is partially self-fertile, but best planted with a Triumph for cross-pollination. Triumph is a heavier bearer, needing Mammoth as a pollinator, but with smaller, rounder, more variable fruits.

Other varieties that might be available are Coolidge, Apollo and Gemini. Coolidge is self-fertile and crops heavily, bearing fruits that vary significantly in size. Apollo produces large, smooth-skinned fruit and is self-fertile, but does not crop heavily and produces better if planted with a Gemini, an early ripening variety.

Feijoas grown from seed can be unreliable because most need a compatible fertiliser to produce fruit. However, seedling feijoas can be used to cross-pollinate named varieties. We grow several seedling shrubs as a hedge to provide this double use, instead of bought specimens.



Top: Mammoth and seedling feijoas.  
Above: Layering the Mammoth variety.

## PROPAGATION

The recommended propagation method is to strike cuttings from a known variety with good fruit quality and desired characteristics. We prefer the more reliable method of layering. Simply make a nick and bend a low-lying branch into a pot of your best soil. Pin down with wires or a stone, prune unnecessary growth, water and leave until roots are established. Then sever the branch and plant out.

## ENJOYING THE FRUIT

The fruit is juicy and aromatic with a jelly-like central pulp containing the small seeds, which are eaten, and a firmer outer layer that can have a gritty texture in seedling varieties. Fruit is especially fragrant if grown in a cool summer time. Flavour is reminiscent of pineapple with sometimes a minty tang.

Feijoas can be eaten fresh by cutting the fruit in half and scooping out the flesh with a teaspoon. They impart a delicate unusual flavour to fruit salad. The pulp can be made into sauces, chutney, jams and preserves. Next year we hope to have enough to try a feijoa wine.

## POSSIBLE PEST PROBLEMS

Leaf-roller caterpillars can be a pest of feijoas. I have read of dill being grown in feijoa orchards to encourage parasitic wasps that prey on these caterpillars. Our garden plantings always include plentiful heartsease to encourage parasitic hoverflies. Previously we have surround-planted feijoas with garlic, which has worked well, but we'll try dill in addition next spring. We control our very small caterpillar problem by hand, or our numerous small birds eat them.

Scale with associated sooty mould is another possible pest and can be controlled by spraying with soluble white oil. Fruit fly might be a pest in some areas. As 'Shangri la' is at 1000 metres elevation, our fruit sets rather late in summer and drops in June, so to date we haven't had any fruit fly problem. 🍷



# The Other Face Of Tassie

by June Marsh, Dodges Ferry, Tas.

I moved to Hobart in 2001, just before my 70th birthday. I was a very healthy person, a bushwalker who never even had a cold from one year to the next, so it came as a shock to find that, within nine months of arriving, I had colorectal cancer. Fortunately, the cancer is now in remission, but I'm still trying to overcome the damage done through surgery, radiation and other treatment. It's going to be a long battle to regain the good health I once took for granted.

By the time the cancer was confirmed I had found my little dream house, with a large rose garden and a lemon tree, and moved in. Hobart was a 45-minute drive away, but that held no worries as I wasn't going to be driving in every day. I settled down to the idyllic life in the beloved Tassie I'd dreamed of for years. It was summer and the first thing I tackled was a no-dig veggie garden. I threw in seeds and put in seedlings and I stood back to watch my first crop of sweetcorn, tomatoes, capsicum, lettuce and others grow furiously. The roses in the established garden (over 40 bushes) were stunning and I happily shared some with my immediate neighbour and the lady estate agent who had sold me the house.

The neighbour never reciprocated by popping in to see how I was when I began to get sick. As in big cities, I suppose it was a case of not wanting to get involved with neighbours, especially old sick ones! The estate agent never acknowledged the flowers I had left at her office on more than one occasion. I started to have my doubts about the Tassie friendliness we hear so much about. I finally realised that the friendliness is there from shopkeepers and government and other officials, but most people are not all that interested in newcomers and making friends. In fact, I can't claim to even have Tasmanian acquaintances because the people I've made friends with all originated on the mainland!

Through joining a walking group shortly after my arrival I did find a few



people who have turned out to be great friends. Although I haven't been able to return to the group yet, we have kept in touch and see each other when we can. Battling cancer and the horrendous side-effects of chemo and radiotherapy has been a lonely business. What has sustained me has been the loving support of my friends on the mainland, through letters, emails and phone calls. And I've been very lucky with visits from my adult family. I have also found at least one regular correspondent through GR and her letters are always a delight.

The point of this saga is to warn people contemplating a move to this glorious island to think it through very carefully. If you're young and fit and have a partner to sustain you through the inevitable setbacks, you'll still make it. As inconvenient as it may be, the sad fact is that the older we get the more likely it is that our once-fit bodies will start to deteriorate. Then we have to be close to major towns for medical treatment, which, in the case of cancer, usually goes on for months if not years.

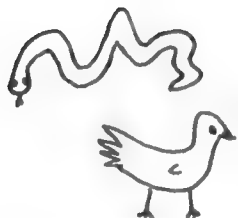
I came very close to buying a house on the east coast, with its spectacular beaches and warmer climate. When I had to drive to Hobart every day for radiotherapy I thanked my lucky stars that I was only faced with a 90-minute return drive. Had I followed my first impulse, I might have ended up much further away from hospitals and doctors.

So, before you let your emotions rule, investigate that dream property

carefully. How far is the nearest town and what facilities does it provide in the way of medical care, a library, schools, entertainment, essential shopping and other services? Many areas of Tasmania have no doctors at all, and in cases of life-threatening illnesses only Hobart and Launceston have major hospitals.

I have no regrets about the move, though it didn't turn out quite as planned. This is such a beautiful place to live, the small pinpricks are not worth worrying about. I must admit it was a shock to find everything is more expensive than on the mainland – food, petrol, property rates, car registration, and now even houses cost as much as in Melbourne. Pensioner concessions are a fraction of what they are in other states. Even without having to pay water rates, it has cost me \$500 to buy water for my tanks in the past seven months, due to the lack of rain. If you're an oldie you'll battle to sustain yourself on a pension. And if you're a young 'un you'll battle to find employment. If you have a skill or a talent that is marketable, you might be able to start your own small business. Then it also becomes important not to live in too isolated a spot, as you need to be in or close to a town with a population that will sustain your business.

I hope I haven't painted too gloomy a picture. It's still a clean, safe, happy island to be on and I wouldn't dream of leaving. But if I'd had a crystal ball, I might have given my move a lot more thought! ☘



# KIDS PAGE

## ANIMALS IN WINTER



As the weather gets colder, people begin to warm themselves with coats, scarves and hats and they warm their homes with heaters. Animals don't dress up like us or use heaters in their homes, but they also have to do things to get through winter. Different animals do different things. Some migrate, which means they move to warmer places or places where food is available. Many birds migrate before winter and some travel very long distances. It seems that birds navigate using the sun, moon and stars for directions. Other animals that migrate include whales, bats and many fish and insects. Some animals hibernate for all or part of winter. This is a kind of very deep sleep and involves the animal taking in extra food in autumn to prepare for hibernation and then using very little energy during hibernation. Bears are one of the warm-blooded animals that hibernate and many cold-blooded animals like frogs, snakes and turtles are also dormant for winter. Some animals adapt to survive winter. This means that they change their behaviour but stay in their normal environment. Growing new and thicker fur and changing diets are examples of adaptation.

## ANIMAL FUN FOR KIDS

A certain amount of adaptation seems to be required for kids in winter too because they often need to find more indoor activities in cold weather. Below are several fun ways to make your own sets of animals and you can be cosy while you create.



## Gingerbread Animals

### You will need:

- 125 g butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1½ cups plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp ginger
- decorations - sultanas, glacé fruit or nuts

Mix butter and sugar in a bowl. Add egg, flour, baking powder and ginger. Roll mixture flat with a rolling pin. Cut simple animal shapes with biscuit cutters or a knife. Add fruit or nuts for the animal's features. Bake in an oven at 180° C for about 10 minutes or until lightly browned.

## Papier Mâché Animals



### You will need:

- ★ glue (flour mixed with water to a runny consistency is good)
- ★ soft paper such as tissue or butcher paper
- ★ paint
- ★ balloons
- ★ bits and pieces for heads, legs,

tails ears and noses (egg cartons and pieces of cardboard are very useful)

Blow up a balloon for each animal. Cover with at least four layers of paper and glue and remember to let it dry between each layer. Paint the animal's body a suitable colour and glue on legs, tail, head and so on using bits and pieces.

If you want shiny animals, brush them with PVA glue when they are dry.

## Ring Puppet Animals

### You will need:

- ★ stiff paper
- ★ glue
- ★ tape
- ★ pencils



Cut thin strips of stiff paper and fit one around each of your fingers. Use a piece of tape to hold each 'ring' together. Draw small animal figures and glue one onto each ring.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Rainy Day Projects

By Vivienne Bolton

This book presents an interesting range of crafty projects with easy to follow step-by-step instructions, including an animal making project with oven-baked modelling clay.

Mostly suitable for upper primary-aged kids. An assortment of handy craft

materials accompanies the book.

Bookwise International, 174 Cormack Rd, Wingfield, SA 5013. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP \$14.95.



# IN THE KITCHEN

**Burgers, croquettes, patties, rissoles, call them what you will! Although they've never gone out of style here at GR, we have updated some classics for the new millennium.**

## THAI FISH BALLS

750 g flake or other boneless white fish fillets, chopped  
2 tbsp fresh ginger, grated  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 tbsp brown sugar  
2 green shallots, roughly chopped  
1 red chilli, chopped  
1 egg  
1/3 cup unsalted roasted peanuts, chopped

3 tbsp olive oil for frying

In the blender, process fish, ginger, garlic, sugar, shallots, chilli and egg until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in peanuts. Roll rounded dollops of mixture into patties. Shallow-fry patties in hot oil in batches until browned and cooked through. Serve with a spicy mayonnaise or sweet chilli sauce. Makes about 20 small patties.

## CHICKPEA & CORN BURGERS

2 cups tinned chickpeas, drained  
1 tbsp grated ginger  
1/4 cup coriander leaves  
1/4 cup mint leaves  
1 red chilli, seeded and chopped  
1 tsp ground cumin  
salt and pepper  
1/2 cup fresh corn kernels  
1 cup breadcrumbs  
1 red capsicum, finely diced  
2 tbsp olive oil for frying

Combine chickpeas, ginger, coriander, mint, chilli, cumin and seasoning in a blender. Blend until coarsely chopped, then add corn. Pulse briefly and transfer to a mixing bowl. Stir in breadcrumbs and capsicum until well combined. Form into 12 patties with wet hands.

Heat oil in a nonstick pan and fry patties for 3 minutes on each side or until well browned and cooked through. Drain on absorbent paper. Try serving patties with tomato salsa made with tomato, avocado, red onion, some chopped coriander and a dash of balsamic vinegar.

## SPICY SWEET POTATO BURGERS

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 tsp grated ginger  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp ground coriander  
1/4 tsp chilli powder  
1 large carrot, grated  
2 med sweet potatoes, peeled and grated

1 cup baby spinach leaves, chopped  
1/2 cup peas

1/2 cup besan (chickpea) flour

2 tbsp olive oil for frying

Heat oil in a small frying pan. Add onions, ginger and garlic and cook over medium heat until onion is translucent. Add spices and cook a further 30 seconds. Remove from heat. Combine carrot, sweet potato, spinach leaves, peas and flour in a bowl. Stir through onion mixture. Shape into 8 patties. Heat oil in a large frying pan. Cook patties for about 2 minutes each side or until cooked through. Serve with a salad and mango chutney.

## PUMPKIN & BARLEY PATTIES

1/2 cup barley  
1 kg pumpkin, peeled and chopped  
knob butter  
1 med onion, chopped finely  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
150 g potato, grated  
2 cups breadcrumbs  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley  
2 tsp chopped fresh thyme  
1/2 cup unsalted roasted cashews, chopped

2 cups breadcrumbs for coating  
2 tbsp olive oil

Add barley to pan of boiling water, simmer, uncovered, for about 30 minutes or until tender, then drain. Add pumpkin to pan of boiling water, boil until tender, drain and mash with butter. Combine barley, pumpkin, onion,

garlic, cheese, potato, breadcrumbs, egg, herbs and nuts in bowl and mix well. Drop about 1/4 cup of mixture into extra breadcrumbs and shape into a patty. Repeat with remaining mixture and breadcrumbs. Place patties on greased oven trays and drizzle with oil. Bake, uncovered, in hot oven for about 25 minutes or until lightly browned, turning once during cooking. Serve hot or cold with tomato salsa. Makes 8.

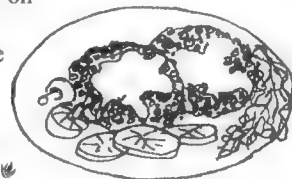
## RED LENTIL BURGERS

1 onion, chopped finely  
1 stick celery, chopped finely  
1 tbsp vegie oil  
1/2 cup red lentils  
1 small carrot, chopped finely  
1 zucchini, grated  
2 cups water  
1 stock cube  
1/2 tsp ground coriander  
1/2 tsp ground cumin  
1/2 cup fresh corn kernels  
3 tbsp parsley, chopped  
1 cup breadcrumbs  
2 tbsp plain flour  
1 egg, beaten lightly  
1 cup breadcrumbs  
2 tbsp olive oil for frying

Heat oil in a frying pan and sauté onion and celery until translucent, then combine with lentils, carrot, zucchini, water, stock cube, coriander and cumin in large saucepan and bring to boil. Simmer, covered, for about 20 minutes or until mixture has thickened. Cool. Stir in corn, parsley and breadcrumbs, shape mixture into 6 patties. Toss in flour, and dip in egg, then in extra breadcrumbs.

Heat oil in large nonstick frying pan; cook burgers until well browned on both sides. Drain on

absorbent paper. Serve with tzatziki and a green leafy salad. 🌿



# HERBAL SPREADS

## A Flavour Feast

by Lillian Barry, Glenorie, NSW.

One of the easiest ways to preserve herbs for winter is to make up a variety of spreads flavoured with different herbs.

Making a herb spread is very simple. Take a block of butter or an alternative spread out of the refrigerator and allow it to come to room temperature. Meanwhile, pick the herbs you wish to use from the garden. Wash them well and pat dry with a towel. Using a sharp knife or herb cutter, finely chop the herbs. When the spread is soft enough to use, beat the chopped herbs into it until evenly combined. Now pat the herb spread into small ceramic pots or plastic tubs. Seal well with plastic wrap or a lid and refrigerate or freeze until needed. If you don't possess small pots or tubs, simply form the spread into a log and wrap in foil, seal with plastic wrap and freeze.

For a decorative effect, scoop the herb spread into balls using a melon baller, or mould into decorative shapes with chocolate moulds. Keep these balls and shapes in the freezer. When needed, they are an attractive addition to any meal.

As with all things, moderation is called for. Obviously, too much butter is not good for us, so experiment with a low-cholesterol alternative such as an olive oil-based spread and add a dash here and there to add unique and interesting flavour and fragrance to almost any dish.

### SAVOURY DISHES

Savory herb spreads can be used to add a last-minute touch of flavour to fish, chicken, steak or pasta. A dab of spread added after cooking and just prior to serving adds a special touch. Try using savory herb spread in sauces and casseroles, over steamed vegetables, in cheese scones and in place of garlic butter for breadsticks.

Try these savory herb combinations.



- Chives, parsley and oregano used over pasta or chicken or in fresh breadsticks or scones.
- Orange zest, coriander and chopped chilli (fresh or dried) used over chicken or steamed vegetables.
- Fennel, lemon balm and garlic greens used over fish or seafood.
- Basil, dried tomatoes and cracked black pepper used over pasta, fish, chicken or vegetables.
- Rosemary, chives, parsley and sage in poultry seasonings and over meats and potatoes.

The combinations available are endless. Through experimenting with a few different blends of your own you

### SWEET DISHES

There are many herbs that lend themselves to sweeter flavourings. Sweet or spicy herb spreads will add flavour to scones, cakes, pikelets and biscuits. They can also be used in cake icing, melted over hot pancakes or scones, or added to sweet pastries and tarts. Use your imagination!

Try some of these combinations and vary them to suit your own tastes.

- Ginger mint, chervil and brown sugar used over pancakes or in biscuits or pastries.
- Lavender, lemon zest and lemon basil in cake icing or with scones.
- Red rose petals, strawberries and chervil with croissants.
- Pineapple sage leaves or flowers and orange zest used over pancakes, scones or in icing.
- Apple mint, grated ginger and crushed coriander with fruit breads.

will soon discover some new and interesting flavours that may become family favourites. 🌿

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# The Australian Miniature Goat

by Sue Ludwig, Canungra, Qld.

I would like to introduce readers to the Australian Miniature goat, a new breed in Australia that is in the very early stages of development. These sweet-natured little animals, some up to half the size of the standard dairy goat, are rapidly growing in popularity and are great for hobby farmers and alternative pet seekers alike.

## THREE TYPES

The purebred animal stands between 45 and 58.5 centimetres in height (around knee high) at maturity. Purebreds are subdivided into three breed types:

- Nuwbies have a short sleek coat and long pendulous ears.
- Shelties have a long lustrous coat and small flat ears. These are ideal for anyone interested in spinning and are capable of producing a very good fleece for their size.
- Pixies have a short coat and upright ears. Some of them carry the self-shedding cashmere fleece over winter.

## A MINI ON THE FARM

Australian Miniature goats are hardy little weed eaters, make great companion animals for a backyard pony and can be run in with cattle for weed control in the paddock. They are helpful gardeners and are only too happy to prune off your newly planted flower bed or vegetable patch when given the opportunity.

The nannies usually breed all year round and have one to three offspring each time. They are good mothers and are capable of producing enough milk for the household. When bottle reared they make wonderful pets for both children and adults.

Most breeders disbud their animals just after birth as horned animals quite often get themselves tangled up in fencing or hooked on children's clothing. Females and desexed males make the best pets and it is better to keep two or more as one on its own will often be quite lonely.

Being a small breed, these goats are very easy to handle. They are intelligent and training them is simple. They require a fraction of the feed that a large goat needs and can be kept in places that are sometimes inaccessible to larger livestock breeds. The Nuwbies and Pixies require little maintenance; the Shelties need a little more care because of the longer coat. A shelter is needed to protect them from the rain and they must have access to fresh water.

Hinge joint fencing is recommended. Although the goats can jump, they tend to squeeze under gates or between panels if they are going to try to get out. Occasionally, they have been found wandering around in the front yard when a gate has been left open, but a shake of some grain in a bucket soon has them back in.

The demand for these little sweeties far outweighs the supply, with most breeders having to put prospective buyers on fairly long waiting lists. The Australian Miniature goat can fetch up to 10 times what meat goats sell for as

they are designed for the pet market.

There are now 29 studs in Australia, extending from Queensland, through NSW and Victoria, right down to Tasmania. Most of these studs have from two to 16 breeding females; half of these have their own bucks and the other half service out. There are over 450 adult registered Australian Miniature goats listed (since February 2000) with the Australian Miniature Goat Registry.

## BREED PROFILE

It is important that animals be selected for their (genetic) height. The aim of breeders is to produce an animal with very good type, in balanced proportions, with great conformation in a small height. This is done over a number of generations.

The maximum height for the purebred Australian Miniature goat is 58.5 centimetres. Grade D stock may reach 63.5 centimetres in height. As is the case with most breeds, a grading system has been put in place for the introduction of new bloodlines from unregistered stock



The size difference between the standard goat and the Miniature. The Miniature goat is about half the size of the standard goat.



Australian Miniatures can be any colour.



Miniatures are friendly and easy to handle.

that meet the height requirements.

All colours are accepted, and solid black or white, broken, mottled, pied and spotted colour patterns are all popular.

#### Development

Australian Miniature goats have been produced by crossing very small feral and cashmere-base stock with that of the larger breeds to introduce the particular types that were needed. From these crosses, only the smallest animals were kept and, using a grading up process over several generations, similar type animals were bred to each other to produce a 'true breed that breeds true'. Purebred status is achieved at the fifth generation, provided all animals in the grading up process have met the height requirements.

#### Types

The Nuwby developed from Anglo Nubian and Boer stock; the Sheltie from Angora stock; the Pixie from Saanen, British Alpine and Toggenburg stock.

#### Temperament

Breeders have selected animals with quiet dispositions. This, along with day-to-day handling, has produced very friendly animals that are easy to work with. Bucks tend to be a bit cantankerous during the breeding season, but not to the point of being unmanageable. Some does may be protective of their young in the first week or so. Horns are usually removed just after birth for both management and safety reasons. A good temperament is an essential trait of an Australian

Miniature goat.

#### Breeding

Bucks are capable of successfully serving as early as three months of age, so care should be taken to keep them separate from the young weanling does. Ideally, the does can be bred around 10 to 12 months of age. Gestation is approximately five months and twins are very common under good nutrition.

Both bucks and does will mate out of season and, with good management, three drops of kids in two years can be achieved.

#### Produce

Miniature goats have many benefits for self-supporting families. They are cheap to feed, needing less than half the food their larger cousins require, and will do well on ground that other animals cannot be kept on.

Well-bred Miniature does can produce enough milk for the family each day and the surplus can be used for

making cheese, ice cream, yoghurt, soaps and the like. Most breeders wether their young bucks and sell their surplus kids as pets, however, they can be grown on to supply the self-supporting family with meat.

Goat manure is high in nitrogen and is an asset to gardeners. It is easy to handle and has virtually no smell, can be mixed with water to produce a liquid fertiliser, and is often collected and used in worm farms along with kitchen scraps.

Miniature goats are happy to live with most other animals on a hobby farm. Their gentle nature and small size make them very easily managed by the children in the family.

#### More Information

Information can be sourced from the Australian Miniature Goat Registry, 4 Mile Lane, Boyland, Canungra, Qld 4275. Ph/fax: 07-5543-0294.

Website: <http://groups.msn.com/AMGR> 🐐

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# Asbestos Alert

by Andrew Mason, Toowoomba, Qld.

Many GR readers do their own renovations and might not be aware of some of the possible dangers that exist in older houses. At present many people around Australia are renovating old houses for resale, driven on by the surge in property prices and the lure of a quick buck. The practice is also promoted heavily through the media, notably with the proliferation of television shows on renovation and real estate.

When renovating or building we know there are certain hazards to be avoided and take steps to try to reduce the risk of injury. Older houses often contain materials that can be hazardous, such as lead and asbestos, which renovators should be aware of.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that is now considered a 'class A' carcinogen. Asbestos has been used for centuries because of its properties of strength and resistance to fire and heat. Ancient people used it for things like strengthening pottery and in the 20th century it found a place in the construction industry and also made its way into many everyday objects. Because its use was so prevalent, it probably exists in most older buildings and is generally not considered a major health risk unless it is crumbling or is disturbed, such as during renovation.

There are three major types of asbestos - white, brown and blue. White asbestos (chrysotile) fibres are

curly and pliable, while brown or grey asbestos (amosite) and blue asbestos (crocidolite) take the form of straight, fine rod-like fibres called amphiboles. Of the three types, blue asbestos is considered to be the most dangerous, though, as they all have similar properties, they have all been linked with the same dangers to health. Australia formerly mined asbestos, but now only imports white asbestos for use in some specialist products. Health authorities are trying to phase out all use of asbestos in this country.

Asbestos fibres are very strong and do not degrade easily. These were the very attributes that encouraged its use, but they are also the basis of the health risks associated with the material. Microscopic asbestos fibres breathed into the lungs are not removed by the body and work their way deep into the lung. Normally, very small foreign particles that are not coughed out of lungs can often be removed by the body's blood system, but due to the shape and nature of asbestos fibres they remain in the lung and scar tissue is formed around them.

## IS IT ASBESTOS?

Asbestos will commonly be found in old fibre cement (fibro) and was also used in insulation materials, plaster, electrical switchboards, and as lagging on water and heating pipes. There are many other products where asbestos was employed and many may not seem obvious, such as its use in linoleum. The danger to the renovator mainly exists where these materials are broken, cut or sanded and dust is created. You will notice that painters never sand back fibro for this very reason. Any action that creates dust should be avoided and work involving materials that could contain asbestos should not proceed until expert advice has been sought.

Because of its danger, asbestos must be disposed of properly; consult your local regulations. Good sources of information on asbestos include the

## ASBESTOS-RELATED DISEASES

### Pleural Plaque

(also known as pleural fibrosis)  
This generally takes at least seven years to develop after asbestos exposure. It is not a cancer but a thickened fibrosis on the lining of the chest cavity. It can be painful and is an indication that a person has been exposed to asbestos.

### Asbestosis

This generally takes 10 years or more after exposure to develop. It is not a cancer, but causes progressive scarring of the lungs affecting the transfer of oxygen and may lead to disability or even death.

### Lung Cancer

This might not develop until decades or more after exposure, and is much more likely to occur in smokers and individuals with asbestosis.

### Mesothelioma

A cancer of the pleura, which is the thin membrane that covers the lung, mesothelioma often takes 30 or 40 years to develop. There is no cure and the disease, once diagnosed, usually leads quickly to death. Australia has the highest rate of mesothelioma in the world. It generally affects men more than women as they are usually the ones exposed to asbestos through work, though there are cases where even younger people have developed the disease when exposed to dusty clothing of someone who has worked with asbestos.

Australian Asbestos Diseases Foundation and the internet. Some of the information in this article came from the Cancer Council of Victoria website: [www.nevdbg.org.au/geninf/aca\\_htm/acafirms.htm](http://www.nevdbg.org.au/geninf/aca_htm/acafirms.htm)

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# Comfortable Temporary Home

by Beverley Paine, Yankalilla, SA.

Robin and I were reluctant to go back to living in a caravan and annexe with a toddler: we'd already done that for 14 months while building our first home, and once was enough! We needed our creature comforts and didn't want to do without a reasonable kitchen and decent bathroom. Besides, why should owner builders have to rough it while building their dream home? Having journeyed down this path before, we knew we'd need those things in life that eased our aches and pains, soothed our troubled brows and made us feel good, especially at the end of a long hard day of building.

Our temporary dwelling was a recycled single garage, 7.3 metres long by about 4 across, with a small extension for half its length that housed both the bathroom and kitchen. It wasn't a lot more work to include these into the structure and it sure made a lot of difference at the end of each day – and helped to keep our marriage intact too!

The garage cost \$100 and was already dismantled when we went to collect it with our trailer. It came with strong steel posts, jarrah purlins and plenty of thick corrugated iron with little rust. A couple of coats of green paint and our temporary home soon blended into the hillside. We bought some second-hand windows and a glass door, as we believe that lots of ventilation and light are essential to maintaining a comfortable living space.

We laid a concrete floor, but regretted not putting down decent footings as it cracked under the heavy wood stove, which also served as our water heater. Cost was always a factor. The walls were lined with silver foil, and short lengths of cheap pine panelling provided extra insulation. We used silver foil in the ceiling, covered with brown hessian, which we later replaced with recycled pine paneling and new gyprock as the dust was a factor with my asthma and we were sick and tired of mice using the hessian as their own special playground!



Top: View of the cabin looking over the vegie garden. The passionfruit gave great shade.

Above: Laying the concrete floor in the cabin.

We lived in one room with our huge red gum dining table at one end beside a kitchen cabinet. In the middle a sofa doubled as our eldest son's bed, with a mattress placed on the floor at night for our daughter. The youngest slept in the bed at the other end of the room with us. At night we all sat on the bed and read stories or watched videos on our 12-volt Orion television/video player. Thirty-centimetre-deep shelves lined the walls.

Living in this compact space helped turn us all into highly organised people!

The first winter saw a cloudburst that dumped 25 millimetres of rain in half an hour. Water poured down the hill and through our small abode, covering the floor. With everything cleared out, including the carpet, which took a few days to dry, we decided to add on a small bedroom for the children. Our home now took on the dimensions of a





With young children, a level grassed area for play was essential.

double garage.

A home, even a temporary one, isn't complete without a garden. We aimed for a sizeable vegie patch, small lawn and low-maintenance shrubs. Gardening kept us in touch with the earth, giving us peace and strength for the all-too-often frustrating work of building a house and home educating our three children.

The house was powered initially by one 450-watt solar photovoltaic panel. Eventually, we had four panels on a tilting frame that Robin built to follow the sun. Our power needs were modest as we didn't have a fridge and the wood stove kept us warm in winter. We later added a computer to the television and radio, as well as the blender and juicer. We used the laundromat twice a week and bought ice in sum-

mer if we felt the need for a cool drink. We lived close to the shops and bought dairy and meat as we needed it and found this worked out more economically for us than storing leftovers of food for long periods of time.

All up our temporary home, without the solar panels, cost around \$1000. Our family of five lived there for four years and loved every minute – it was in all senses of the word a 'home'.

Beverley and Robin home schooled their three children while building their home on 4½ acres overlooking the Bungala River on the beautiful Fleurieu Peninsula. For information about permaculture, home education, and activities at the natural learning centre visit the website: [www.beverleypaine.com](http://www.beverleypaine.com)

## HOME SAFETY FOR LITTLES

Across Australia every day 170 children are hospitalised following accidents in the home. Younger children are particularly at risk. Energy company, Origin Energy, provides tips for reducing the risk of children injuring themselves around electrical or gas appliances.

- Use a fixed guard to keep young children away from heaters and ovens.
- Unplug and put away portable appliances after use.
- Set the hot water service at 50° C to avoid scalds.
- Safety switches installed by a registered electrician will safeguard children from shocks.
- Teach children not to touch anything electrical with wet hands.
- Do not allow cords to hang from benches where children might be able to grab them.
- Keep a fire blanket and extinguisher in the kitchen to deal with small fires.
- Install the appropriate number of fire alarms.
- Have an emergency evacuation drill and teach older children about it.
- Learn first aid.
- Never use portable heaters in bathrooms.
- Never allow children to play with electrical appliances or power points.
- Never leave children near unattended cooking or electrical appliances that are switched on.
- Never let children play with bathroom taps.

More information about safety in the home can be found at the website: [www.originenergy.com.au/safety/](http://www.originenergy.com.au/safety/)



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**KNP**  
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# Once Upon A Loaf Of Bread

by Deborah McDonnell, Walpeup, Vic.

When I was 12 years old I suddenly decided I'd like to make some bread. The first recipe I tried was one of the old ones where you mix the yeast with water and leave it to ferment a bit before you mix it in with the flour. A nasty, messy business. The first loaf turned out small and doughy and reeked of yeast. But I was full of enthusiasm and wasn't going to be discouraged that easily, even though I had to eat it! Next I made buns, which were again doughy and rock-hard. We discovered that if we microwaved them with butter they were reasonably palatable. So I tried again.

I had wonderful backing from my family, with my mother and a few brothers who were fellow enthusiasts to help me, and with other brothers who would eat just about anything vaguely digestible. Everyone was ready to encourage my efforts.

I hunted about for different bread recipes, trying each one with varying rates of success, till I happened on the Tandico cookbook. One day we were buying sachets of yeast, and we noticed an add for a free cookbook on the side of the packet. So we bought the yeast and sent for the book and wasn't it a treasure trove when it arrived! It's the baker's delight, packed with recipes that work just about every time.

It was the first time I'd come across the method of mixing the yeast in with the dry ingredients, then mixing the water and oil with the whole lot. I was very pleased with it – I'd always hated the yucky job of mixing the bowl of yeasty stuff into the rest. The recipe worked like a charm. The bread we baked was light and fluffy, for the most part,

and tasted better than any store-bought bread I'd ever tasted. Not only did it taste better, it had more substance, thus filling you up more; the loaves were bigger than any you can get in the store, and they were cheaper! We spent all one afternoon working out how much it cost us to make each loaf. Unfortunately, I can't remember the exact figures that we worked out, but all were a far cry cheaper than the store's price.

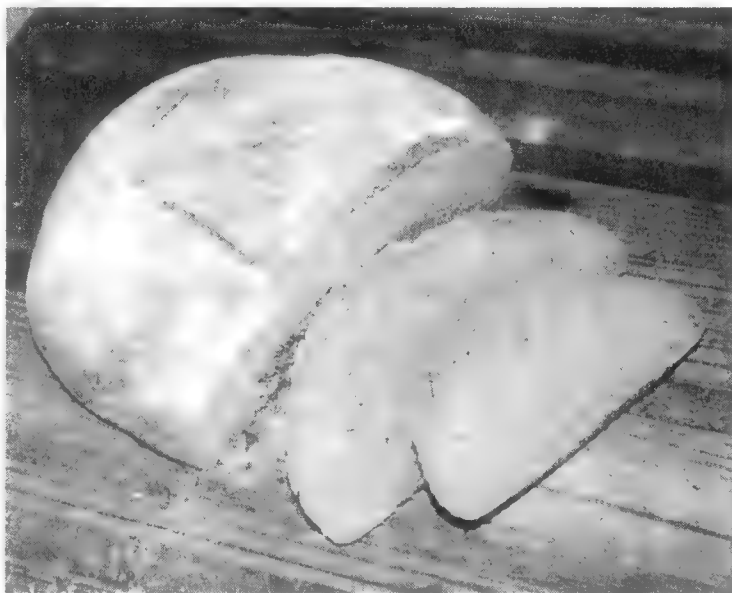
Since we lived out on a farm and only went shopping once a fortnight, some 100 or so kilometres away, we'd had to buy a large amount of bread, try to bring it home without squashing it, and freeze it till we needed it. So, for us, switching to making our own bread was a blissful alternative.

It wasn't all smooth sailing. Did you know, for instance, that if you forget to put in the oil, the bread, so beautifully risen, drops like a stone when you put it in the oven? If you don't put in enough oil, it can still sink when you move it suddenly to put it in the oven, or if it gets hit with a draught of air or an abrupt temperature change.

Eventually, we ended up buying bulk 500-gram packets of yeast and keeping it in jars in the back of the fridge, and 10- or 20-kilogram bags of flour and keeping them in a carboy (plastic barrel with a screw-on lid) in the kitchen or porch. Both are substantially cheaper when bought in bulk.

We also found it worth keeping a bit of flour in an ice cream container, which we call the 'kneading flour'. It's handy to pull it out so the kneaders (I roped in my elder brothers) can dip their hands in it if the dough's too sticky. It's easier than leaving the whole bag out. When the kneading's done, we use it to sprinkle under and on top of the dough before we set it up to rise (some people call the rising process 'proving'). We had some fun and games trying to hack the dough off the tea towel and scrape it out of the bowl before we cottoned on to covering it in flour!

Another common occurrence in the early days was suddenly realising that we'd forgotten to put a timer on, and the bread had been rising for several hours! Or sometimes, we had put a bell on, but just hadn't noticed it ringing. You'd be surprised how easy that can be when you're engrossed in something. Sometimes we were lucky enough to catch it before it had gone too far, but usually it had dropped. Sometimes we could tease it back up enough to make a decent loaf, but we ended up with a fair few small, doughy ones – still edible, just not as nice as they would have been. Our bell troubles were cured when we acquired one of those rare, annoying and invaluable timers that ring till you turn them off.



Fresh home-baked wholemeal bread to make your mouth water.

Once, the gas cut out on our oven while we were halfway through cooking a batch of buns. We tried to finish the cooking in our old wood stove, but it didn't work very well. Not even the pet lamb would eat those!

There were some good things, too. One day, when my mother rang up the bank, she got to chatting with the lady at the other end who gave us this priceless tip: if you want a crustier loaf, try putting a tray of water in the bottom of the oven. It works beautifully. A word to the wise, though; watch out for the steam when you open the oven door!

One way and another, things worked out, and my mother and I have been making all our family's bread in the years since – no mean feat, considering our family has 10 members, seven of them growing boys. But that also means there's plenty of people to delegate the kneading to. If you have any trouble convincing your boys, tell them it's good for building up the arm muscles.

The recipe has changed a bit since we first found it, been adapted over the years with trial and error, but it's held us in good stead. The following recipes are those we use now. I wish you good baking and all the luck that I had, and more.

#### WHOLEMEAL BREAD

3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp yeast  
2 tsp salt  
4 cups wholemeal flour  
4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tsp sugar  
2 cups baker's flour\*  
a little more than 2 cups warm water  
4 tbsp oil

Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl (all teaspoons are heaped). Add the water and oil. Mix till it's mostly together, then knead the rest of the way (you'll need some flour handy for this!). Knead dough for 10 minutes. The harder you thump it, the better.

If you removed the dough from the bowl to knead it (some do, but I don't), return it to the bowl and sprinkle flour under and on top of the dough, making sure you get the sides. Cover with a wet tea towel (folded in half), and leave in a warm place to rise for about 40 – 50 minutes, till it's doubled in size. You don't want your rising spot to be too cold, or it'll rise slowly, or too hot, or you'll kill the yeast. Between 30 and 40° C is a good rule of thumb. On a rack

above an old wood stove, on top of a warming oven or in a poorly insulated room on a hot day are all good places.

When it's risen, knock it down by punching it in the centre once, then knead for 1 minute. If you did a good job with the flour sprinkling, you should be able to just start kneading, though if you made a particularly moist (or should I say sloppy?) dough, you might need to get out the kneading flour again.

Halve, and push into two well-greased loaf tins (canola tray-spray works like a charm), or you can cut it into 16 pieces and put them on a couple of greased baking trays. You can make your rolls round, or roll them long, or tie them in knots, or anything that takes your fancy. Little kids love helping shape the bread. You could have some fun experimenting with making your actual loaves into different shapes.

Brush your bread with milk (or water or beaten egg), and, if you like, now is the time to sprinkle poppy or sesame seeds on top. Put in a warm place to rise again for 30 – 45 minutes, till doubled in size or as large as you want. If they aren't big enough when the bell rings, just put it on again by 5 or 10 minute lots till you're satisfied. You'll want the oven to be warmed up and ready by the time the bread's risen.

Cook at 230° C for 10 minutes, then turn down to 190° C for another 10. Turn tray around and cook for 5 minutes longer. Depending on your oven, you might need to cook for longer. Just set the timer for small increments till the bread's nicely browned. Take note of what works best for your oven. Some ovens burn in a few minutes, one oven I left the bread in for an extra 30 minutes and pulled it out unharmed.

When the bread's done, turn it out onto a wire rack to cool. The bread is nicest fresh, especially when it hasn't even been in the fridge, but it freezes well, so you can make large batches, keep out what you need immediately and pop the rest in the freezer. Then, you can pull it out to defrost the night before you'll need it. When you're freezing it, by the way, put it in plastic freezer bags, push out the air and secure it with a plastic twist-tie.

This is your basic bread recipe. The

following variations are all delicious and just as easy to make.

#### GRAIN BREAD

3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp yeast  
4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tsp sugar  
4 cups baker's flour\*  
2 tsp salt  
2 cups wholemeal flour  
a little more than 2 cups warm water  
4 tbsp oil  
1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup burghal (cracked wheat)  
4 tbsp linseed

Make as for wholemeal bread, adding the grains just before the water and oil. The burghal needs to be soaked overnight, or for at least two hours. Grain bread also needs to be cooked a little longer than wholemeal, so add 5 minutes to the first and last timers. Be inventive and experiment with your own combinations of grain.

#### SULTANA BREAD

3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp yeast  
4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tsp sugar  
4 cups baker's flour\*  
2 tsp salt  
2 cups wholemeal flour  
a little more than 2 cups warm water  
2 tsp ground cinnamon  
4 tbsp oil  
2 cups (or 2 large handfuls) sultanas

Make as for wholemeal, adding the sultanas with the dry ingredients. Experiment with different blends of sultanas, currants and raisins, perhaps even some mixed spices and citrus peel to make it interesting. This bread is especially nice when toasted.

#### WHITE BREAD

3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp yeast  
4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tsp sugar  
6 cups baker's flour\*  
a little more than 2 cups warm water  
2 tsp salt  
5 tbsp oil

Make as for wholemeal. Although white bread isn't as good for you as other breads, even I must admit this bread is truly delicious. It makes top quality rolls and breadsticks.

\*The baker's flour referred to in my recipes is top quality white flour, especially made for bakers, as the name suggests, and it produces better results than any other white flour. ☘

# BACKYARD POTTERY PROJECT

by Debbie Eldemire, Cairns, Qld.

**Believe it or not, you can make your own kiln in the backyard to fire your pottery, and it costs next to nothing. Here's how.**

Many people are put off having fun with clay at the thought of the expensive kiln needed to fire their works of art. This primitive sawdust firing technique is simple and cheap to do and is a great introduction to the wonderful world of clay. Pieces fired in this manner are not waterproof, but make lovely tea light or incense burners, fridge magnets, small box shapes, pendants or seed pod shapes.

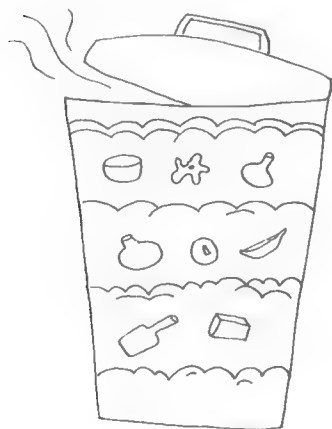
## CLAY CREATIONS

Obtain some smooth clay and model small objects with it. As soon as the clay begins to dry, carefully polish it with the back of a teaspoon or a small stone. This is called burnishing.

When the clay begins to scratch during burnishing it is time to stop. The carbon from the sawdust will penetrate the clay more effectively if this is done well. Leave the pieces to dry until they are no longer cool to the touch.

## SAWDUST FIRING

You will need an enclosed container such as a metal rubbish bin, but a clean large paint tin will do, and a sheet of metal to use as a lid. It's very important to use untreated sawdust.



Sawdust kiln in a rubbish bin.

- Place about 75 millimetres of sawdust in the bottom of the container.
- Pack your clay pieces in between layers of sawdust until all are in or the container is nearly full. Dried seaweed is an excellent addition to the sawdust between the pots if you have access to it.
- Add about 75 millimetres of sawdust to the top of the container.
- Light a small fire to get the sawdust smouldering.
- Put the lid on, leaving a small gap to allow air intake. Some people like to put holes in the sides of the container to allow more airflow and faster firing, but I think a slow burn gives a better result.
- The sawdust will smoulder in an average-size bin for about 48 hours.
- Remove pots when bin is completely cool.



## FINISHING OFF

Once the pots or ornaments are cool they can be polished with beeswax, or any other wax. The pieces usually end up with a beautiful black satiny sheen. ♪

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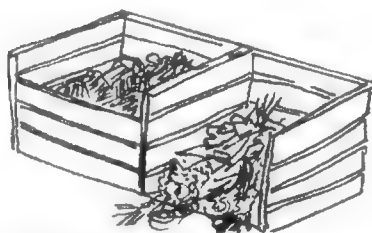
# NUTRIENT OVERLOAD

by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

Every summer we hear about more and more toxic blue-green algal blooms in waterways. These nasty little algae thrive and multiply in water that is slow moving or stagnant, warm and nutrient-rich. The warmth and stagnant water are, usually, natural outcomes of our summer weather conditions and there's not much we can do about them on an individual level. The high nutrients – nitrogen and phosphorus – that send the algae into a breeding frenzy though, come directly from human activities. This, we can do something about.

The most obvious source of excess nutrient in waterways is from fertiliser runoff, especially in areas of sandy soil. It's very easy to blame farmers using large amounts of chemical fertilisers for this problem, and there is some justification for this attitude, but many suburban block gardeners are also unwitting contributors. Runoff from suburban and country town backyards ends up in waterways. This runoff is just as likely to be laden with excess nitrogen and phosphorus as farm runoff.

Overuse of fertiliser is not the only source of excess nutrients; some comes from industry, but, closer to home, other sources include incorrectly disposed of plant material, soil, dog poo, detergent, septic tank leaks and bread fed to water birds.



## ACTION

Some simple lifestyle choices will make a difference.

- Grow more native plants that need less fertiliser.
- Grow fewer deciduous trees – their uncollected leaves wash into stormwater drains and thence into waterways.
- Grow less lawn and fertilise lawns less often.
- Use fertiliser sparingly. Organic fertilisers (manures, compost, vermicast) decompose slowly and are less likely to be leached from the soil. If using a manufactured fertiliser, such as on lawns, though many organic gardeners would consider this a waste of time, money and resources, look for one with an NPK ratio of 10:1:6 and apply it in spring or early autumn, not in summer or winter.
- Ensure that soil and garden wastes do not leave your property. Compost leaves, grass clippings and other plant wastes so the nutrients are reused in your garden, not washed into waterways, and use lots of mulch. I must diverge slightly here and ask: what *are* they thinking of, those people who dump

their grass clippings alongside country lanes and *right beside my local creek!*

- Use phosphorus-free dishwashing detergents and low- or no-phosphorus washing powders or liquids. If you are reusing greywater on the garden, look for low sodium content as well as low phosphorus.

- Compost dog droppings separately or bury around nonfood gardens.
- Do not feed bread to water birds.

## What To Buy?

When buying cleaning products choose those with words such as zeolite, alternative builders, or phosphate free on the label. Avoid those with STPP (sodium tripolyphosphates) or phosphate builders. The letters NP mean there is no phosphorus.

The following products are by no means the only low/no phosphorus products on the market, but are examples of what to look for. Those marked \* are also low sodium.

**Clothes Washing:** Fiesta Nappy Care, Farmland Nappy Care, Savings, Bushland\*, Hurricane, Greencare\*, Earth Choice\*, Home Brand\*.

**Dish Washing:** Down To Earth, Bushland, Palmolive.

**General Cleaners:** Bathroom Plus, Earth Choice Multi Purpose Spray, Citro Clean Multi Purpose.

**Car Wash:** Kitten.

**Dog Wash:** Most do not contain phosphorus. 🐾

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# Cell Grazing At Crystal Waters

by Max O Lindegger, Crystal Waters, Qld.

Cell grazing is a cattle raising system particularly suited to those on the land who want an ethical and sustainable farming method that will allow them to grow their own meat economically and without chemicals.

## WHY CELL GRAZING?

It has been argued for some time here at Crystal Waters Permaculture Village that the land used by cattle and sheep could be utilised to grow grain, legumes and vegetables. This assumes that such crops could be raised on land where limited water is available or fertility may be low.

Too often meat is unfairly equated with feedlots, whereas in fact a lot of meat produced in Australia for domestic consumption comes from animals that spend their lives on pasture. A vegetarian diet is often promoted as being healthier than a diet that includes meat. Animal fats, however, are a rich source of vitamins A and D and meat contains all essential amino acids and is a good source of vitamin B12, phosphorus and vitamin B6.

There is a perception that much of the meat sold in supermarkets may contain steroids, growth promoters, antibiotics and other additives. Most Western diets are probably too high in meat and some of the ways animals are raised are ethically inexcusable and agriculturally unsustainable. Cell grazing is a more ethical and healthy method of raising meat.

## OUR SET-UP

Crystal Waters is located in a subtropical environment in south-east Queensland and forms part of a river flat. The land is mostly level and fairly fertile, has good drainage and is well protected from strong winds. On the negative side, it is rather shady, subject to occasional flooding and has a limited water supply. The parcel had been heavily grazed by horses for many years and was weedy when we started.

The main agricultural function on

the land is horticulture. We grow about 120 pecans on a 10-metre grid and about 80 kaffir limes. A steep area and some wetland is set aside for habitat and pest predator purposes.

About five years ago Lowline cattle were introduced. The cattle keep the grass short, but do add complications to management.

The pecans and kaffir limes, planted about eight years ago, are producing. Some land is reserved, mainly between the rows of pecans, for small cropping. Small cropping depends on reliable water and is only feasible in good years when the river flow permits irrigation.

The pecans have been established along a grid and the kaffir limes along rows. Every second row of pecans is offset by five metres to create extra distance between individual trees and offer more sun exposure. Each tree is provided with a small sprinkler. Irrigation is only required during nut set and only in dry years.

## CELL GRAZING IN PRACTICE

The approximately two-hectare block is subdivided into 17 cells or mini paddocks. Indeed, cells 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 14, 15, 16, 17 are often split again, giving a total of about 27 cells. The cattle are allowed to graze in each cell, contained by electric fencing, for two to four days. The grazing duration very much depends on the herd size (in our case we keep about 10 cattle plus a couple of small calves), cell size and time of year. The time it takes for the cattle to return to the first paddock varies from 40 days to possibly 90 days. Cell grazing allows maximum utilisation of the space and the pasture.

### Advantages of Cell Grazing

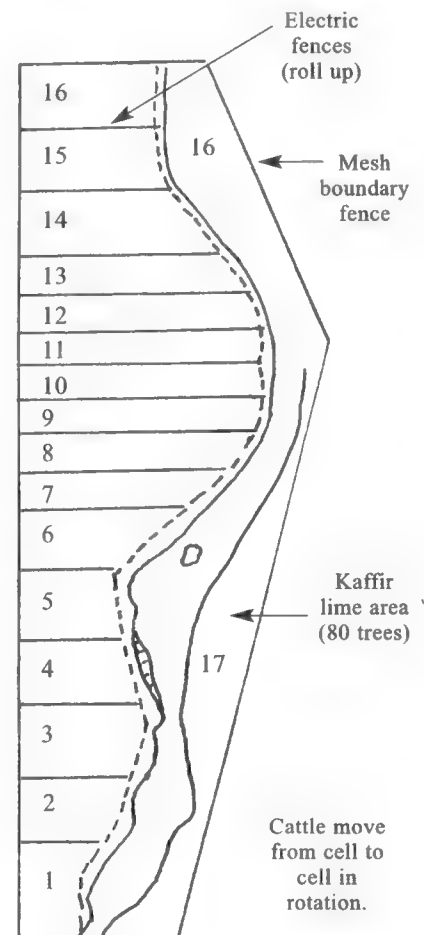
- Excellent utilisation of an area.
- Reduced parasite load because of intervals between grazings.
- Higher stock numbers (up to 70 percent).
- Cattle have pasture of even nutrition and better digestibility.

- Permits alternative uses of area.
- Much reduced compaction around gates and watering points.
- Manure is evenly spread and can be incorporated into the soil by dung beetles and microorganisms.
- Minimises erosion and water pollution.
- Fewer weeds.

### Disadvantages of Cell Grazing

- Increased infrastructure costs.
- Extra maintenance time and more management.
- Restricted space does not allow cattle to roam.
- Requires good penning to minimise conflict with other uses.

### Plan of Cell Grazing at Crystal Waters





It is obvious that, once the infrastructure is established, cell grazing offers an excellent management option.

Extensive stocking with continuous grazing may sustain a grazing animal, but the practice does not optimise the potential of the animal or pasture productivity. Legumes and some grasses do not tolerate continuous grazing and may be eaten out, leaving usually poorer, less productive pastures.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PASTURE

We have put a fair effort into improving the pastures, but had to be careful not to do this at the cost of the trees. We seeded a mix of permanent legumes (white clover, lucerne, lotononis, shaw creeping vicia and cordillo centro) around each tree just beyond the drip line. With this mixture we find that most of the time at least some of the legumes are growing well. White clover, lucerne, shaw creeping vicia and cordillo centro have seeded throughout the paddock. The last two were established by growing them from seed in seedling cells and transplanting them into the field when conditions were favourable. The results have been very positive.

#### Pasture Establishment

We normally undersow with annual rye grass and some lupins from about March on. We do this without mechanical cultivation, but let the cows do the work. The process goes like this.

**Day One:** Cattle are introduced into a new cell.

**Day Two:** The cell is lightly seeded with rye and some lupins.

**End Of Day Three:** Cattle are moved to a new paddock where the same process is repeated. During days two and three the cattle trample the seed into the ground. After the cattle are moved the remaining stubble and weeds are cut. I use a walk-behind heavy-cut mower with good success.

Cattle can be allowed to graze after four to six weeks. If you can pull out the whole rye plant, don't graze. Allow the rye to establish itself quite well. For the first grazing don't graze too hard, leave some stubble behind. Recovery will be much quicker if you get some rain or can irrigate.

If spring rains are sufficient, I may plant cow peas and Japanese millet seeds using the above method, but without mowing. This gives great summer bulk and can be harvested as hay if the area is not required for grazing.

#### IMPORTANCE OF SOIL

We have had our soil tested every year since we started farming this paddock and follow the recommendations pretty carefully. We have applied modest amounts of liquid lime, lime (as ground lime) and Alroc Extraphos plus biodynamic preparations. Productivity gains are very visible and positive changes also show up on the soil test results. We now have a nearly balanced soil and an organic matter level of almost 10 percent – high for our region.

The proof of a good soil is in the pudding – the cattle have come through the drought really well and in 2003 we actually harvested a crop of nuts. I'm

very positive that cattle, grazed carefully to minimise compaction of the soil, can help improve the soil through their manure.

#### CATTLE AND TREES

A great symbiotic relationship is possible between cattle and trees. As far as the cattle are concerned, the shade from the trees in summer creates an ideal environment. Grazing animals prefer shady places at even moderately high temperatures. It has been shown that pastures grow better in semi-shaded paddocks. The trees benefit from the fertiliser obligingly dropped by the cattle.

#### IN THE FUTURE

We would like to purchase more troughs so that we don't need to shift them from water point to water point as often. With the expectation of 'normal' summer rains, we want to plant more self-seeding, pest-predator plants, which can provide a constant supply of nectar and pollen to predatory insects.

We desperately want to grow vegetables between some rows of pecans to create a better cash flow.

Under-sowing of some herbage will be tried to offer the cattle more diverse pasture.

Of course we want to improve our land. The problem is that with so few animals it is easy to get attached to each one. Our 'worst' cow is probably our favourite. How could we ever eat our best friend?

#### SUMMARY

- Keep the needs of your pasture as well as the needs of your animals in mind. Don't overgraze, allow the pasture to rest.
- Provide quality water to all paddocks.
- Provide multiple shade points to avoid overfertilising or heat stress.
- Use flexible fencing that is safe to the animals and the operator.

Max O Lindegger is one of the designers of Crystal Waters and a partner in Ecological Solutions Pty Ltd, which offers a series of internships and courses. For more information please contact by email: [info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au](mailto:info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au) or ph: 07-5494-4741, fax: 07-5494-4578 or check the website: [www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au) ☛

# RECYCLING An Aussie Icon

by Robert Millet, Devonport, Tas.

Few items in Australian life have achieved iconic status to equal that of the dinky-di Aussie invention: the Hills Hoist. This far-ahead-of-its-time, genuine solar dryer used no energy once constructed and installed, and lasted for yonks in the days of the quarter-acre block backyard. Kids converted it to a rotary swing and shade cloths were draped over it. For the creative it became a structure for cubbies, shadehouses, or a sudden-rain barbecue shelter. As happens to many icons, it slowly faded from popularity, replaced by more modern ideas or devices. So, what to do with an old Hills Hoist?

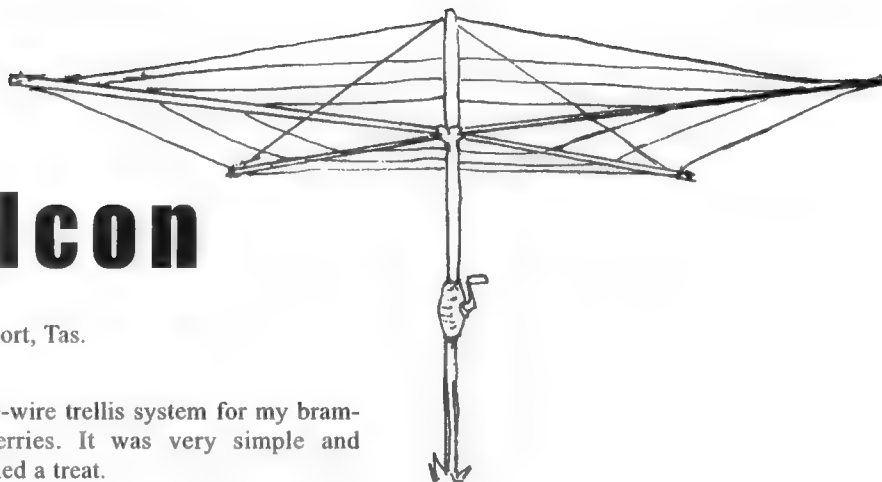
After having no luck trying to sell my solid old hoist, twice, and being determined not to throw it away, I finally hit upon a great idea to recycle most of it. I converted the parts to a

three-wire trellis system for my brambleberries. It was very simple and worked a treat.

## INSTALLING POSTS AND BRACING

The four steel rods with loops to hold the laundry wire made excellent posts, while the four curved-end support rods made fine diagonal posts to brace the main posts. There are sufficient parts from each hoist to make two short rows or one long row. Drive the two-metre-long posts in at a slight back angle to help maintain tensioning when applied later. I drove mine in about 650 millimetres, giving a trellis height of 1.35 metres.

The effectiveness of the diagonal braces can be increased by bolting or welding short lengths of metal (such as the pieces that held the rods and supports to the hoist's centre post) at right angles to the buried end, in a manner



similar to that used for concreting a larger post in place.

## ATTACHING WIRES

The galvanised wire is tough and far stronger than required to hold up a few bramble plants, such as thornless blackberries (they supposedly have no seeds for birds to scatter far and wide), loganberries and boysenberries.

After all the posts and braces were in place, and starting at the bottom row, I put the wire through the loop, then went around the post and brought the wire through the loop on the other side, ending up by wrapping the short end (about 120 millimetres long) around and around the wire. A short length of small diameter copper pipe or pair of pliers helped to wind the ends tightly. If you have to join the wires, try this trick: Make a loop at the end, and twist a loop as just described, then pass the end of the next wire through that end loop and make a loop in it. Squeeze the two loops flat with pliers to avoid having the wires go slack during tensioning.

Berry vines don't care how ugly the wires are, as long as they hold the canes up out of the dirt. Depending how long you want your row of berry supports, you might have to buy some more galvanised wire. Another trick is to loop the wire from one row up or down to another row and continue to the end of the wire. However, I found that the loops on the hoist were not strongly attached, so I wrapped the wire around the post proper, just in case.

What spacing of the wires, you ask? While spacing depends, to a great



Wire and steel rods from a Hills Hoist were recycled into a three-wire berry trellis.



## Companion Planting

A note of caution to GR gardeners who practise companion planting: Tansy is recommended as a companion plant for brambleberries because it enhances growth and repels insects such as ants and various beetles. If you decide to use this potentially invasive species, I suggest you surround each plant with a corrugated iron barrier sunk at least 300 millimetres down, in a manner similar to controlling nonclumping bamboos. However, this root isolation just might limit or destroy the companion planting benefits.

extent, on which article from which country you happen to be reading, the three-wire trellis system, which seems to be the most typical, varies from 460 millimetres to 750 millimetres for the first wire; 760 millimetres to 1240 millimetres for the second; and 1370 millimetres to 2000 millimetres for the third. Of course, theory is nice, but GR persons are basic and practical, so I used the existing loop spacing. My spacing came out at 650 millimetres to the ground, 1050 millimetres and 1350 millimetres. The trellised row, which is 13 metres long, looks good and ought to carry the vines efficiently without requiring stretching to harvest the berries.

### Tensioning Wire

I tensioned the wires by simply pulling the wire through the loop and folding it

over a bit, then pulling a bit more, taking in the slack, then pulling again, just as a sailor does to tension halyards. However, there is no need to get the wires so tight they vibrate at middle C in the wind. A lower tension allows the plants to move in the wind and thus go with the flow during a blow.

**Caution:** Whenever you work with wire of any size, always wear goggles that completely cover the eyes. A springy wire end can poke out an eye in a trice, or inflict a nasty gash in the skin. I have used this trick as well: Fold the end over about 50 millimetres back on itself. If the wire does hit you, the rounded end will not cause serious damage. Stout gloves help to protect the hands from stray burrs or broken strands.

## WATERING THE VINES

If you are going to water your berry vines with a 13-millimetre trickle system hose, try this trick: Gently wrap the hose around the lower wire in a long easy spiral. In this way you will need few, if any, ties to hold the hose to the wire and, once the drippers are installed, you can walk along the row and at a glance check if all drippers are working. In addition, if the hose is up on the wire and not on the ground, cutting the grass or tilling the soil around the vines is possible without chopping into the hose or drippers.

## TYING THE VINES

In the photo, note the slight back angle of the post. The white cloth tapes flutter in the breezes and help scare away birds as well as remind humans there



are wires about. If you look closely, you can see I've followed my own advice by employing 'You Little Ripper' velcro ties (see GR 158, page 15) to hold the vines to the wires. Permanent ties are not required, as this year's vines will be pruned after they bear fruit, and next year's crop vines tied up ready for the new season.

## SEEKING MORE USES

I was delighted to find a new use for my old Hills Hoist. Right now I'm wondering what to do with the up and down winding mechanism; I am positive there is a unique gardening use for that part too. Perhaps I need a glass of blackberry wine to inspire me. Meantime, happy berry growing, GR mates. ☘



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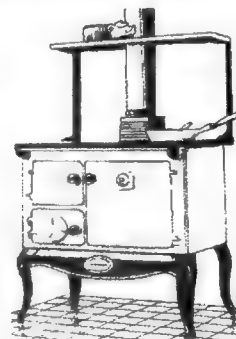
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# ORGANIC GARDENING

## In The Tropics

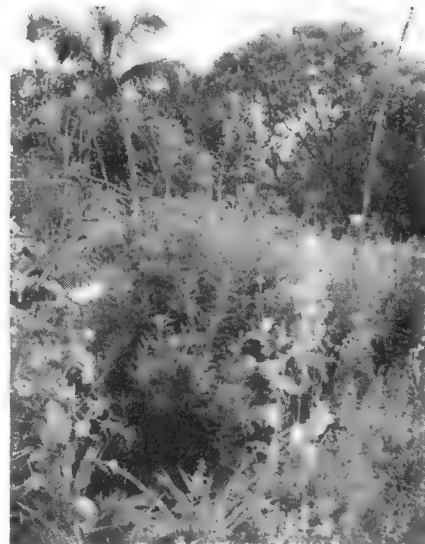
by Denise Kettle, Annandale, Qld.

I have lived in North Queensland all of my life and I always get excited when I read in GR about another North Queenslander getting into organic gardening. I'm a strong believer in organic food for the good health of our bodies and the planet, so have grown our household vegetables organically for the past 25 years. Our library is just bulging with books on the subject and I must agree with Anne Sumpter (GR 160) that a lot of books do not take the Queensland tropics into consideration. Consequently, most of my knowledge has been gained through experience.

### KEY ELEMENTS

Queenslanders, don't despair, it is possible to grow vegetables organically in the tropics all year round, but it takes work, planning and persistence, particularly in the initial stages. You also have to be attentive to your soil's needs. Most of my experience has been with clay-based soils and the following are key factors that have contributed to my success, both now and in the good old days when it rained for three months of the year.

- A raised garden.
- Shadecloth protection in summer.
- Frame for shadecloth constructed in such a way as to allow rain to run off and not well up in pockets.
- Beds with good drainage.
- Healthy and well-nourished soil.
- Well-planned utilisation of garden space.
- Planting only enough vegetables to suit the family's needs.
- Allowing sufficient space for each plant to breathe, which helps discourage diseases in the humid months.
- Using herbs and flowering plants to camouflage and protect the vegetables.
- Knowing which insects and birds frequent the garden in all seasons.
- As with any organic gardening, working with nature, not against it.



### TOADS

I have had much experience with this pest, which is generally not taken seriously enough, probably because it is a problem that affects the northern part of Australia more than the rest of the country.

Years ago I used to kill any toad that was unfortunate enough to cross my path. I used to patrol at night with the torch to try to keep the numbers down. Then, some time ago, a mysterious disease saw their numbers diminish somewhat. These days, despite, or maybe due to, drought conditions, their numbers seem to have re-established to the extent that they are invading pristine environments for the first time.

The principle I adopted is quite simple: if a pest cannot be controlled using companion planting, pest deterring herbs and flowers that encourage predatory insects and birds, I try to use it as a co-worker in the garden. I don't do night patrols any more, but if any toads are sighted on our property, the males are allowed to survive and the females are sent to toad heaven.

I've found that the compost heap is

the toad's favourite gathering place at night. For the past two years, because of dry conditions, we've had a huge problem with the African black beetle, which chews plants just below ground level at night, leaving a path of destruction, particularly with seedlings, to be found in the morning. These beetles lay their eggs in the compost heap (and vegetable garden) and the male toads love to eat the larvae, which look like white curl-shaped grubs. Together with collars (made from small plastic cylindrical containers) around the plants, the toads help to control any possible damage these pests may cause. By culling the females, I can control their numbers and use them to my own advantage and that of my garden. I empty pets' water containers at night and refresh them in the morning, so the toads can't use them for their aquatic pursuits.

If you're concerned about toads digging up your plants, place simple, small-meshed wire frames over your vegetable seedlings. If you establish your herbs and flowering plants before planting your vegetables, you'll find

the toads will shelter under these, rather than nestle into the soil around your freshly planted seedlings. I've found *Pentas rubiaceae* (readily available in North Queensland and grows from cuttings) a very helpful flowering shrub, as it attracts a vast army of predatory insects, bees and butterflies and provides excellent shelter for the toads. I keep it trimmed to a manageable size and this regular trimming promotes further flowering.

We have a pond, fenced by a 46-centimetre-wide mesh of the small square variety (stronger than chicken wire and available at hardware stores), which is secured to short poles and pinned with spikes, made from heavy gauge wire, into the ground a short distance from the actual pond. It doesn't look an eyesore, as we've planted ferns around the perimeter of the fence. The ferns are too fine for toads to climb. We have found the occasional toad inside the fence, but it has gained access through damage to the fence, caused accidentally while pulling weeds or unwanted plants. Otherwise, it works.

## FRUIT FLY

I was heartened to read the story about the natural fruit fly predator by Trevor Wilkins (GR 160). We have these spiders in the garden as well and I'd like to know how to attract more, as my husband has actually seen them with the fruit flies firmly in their grasp.

The fruit fly is a regular visitor to North Queensland and I've tried just about every trap design I've read about (including those in GR). The fruit flies still give the citrus and garden crops a hiding when the mango season finishes and they have no mangos in which to lay their eggs. I'm currently using traps containing female-attractant wicks. They work, but you need a lot of them I've found. I have noticed that the capsicums, which usually succumb to fruit fly damage each year, have not been badly affected this time. I have come to the conclusion that the herb sage, which was originally planted with Chinese cabbage but has spread next to the capsicums, has discouraged the fruit fly. Since picking the Chinese cabbage, the sage has grown into the capsicum patch. I don't have a trap near the capsicums.

## WHITEFLY

On the subject of capsicums, they and the chillies usually succumb to spiralling whitefly in the summer months, but since I've placed shredded white paper around the bases of these plants the whitefly numbers are not so great. According to the experts, the shredded white paper disorients the whiteflies and they go elsewhere. There is another moth that stings these fruits as well. Its numbers have also decreased with the application of the shredded paper.

## VEGIE SUCCESS

Vegetables successfully organically grown to date include beans, beetroot, bok choy, capsicum, carrot, celery, Chinese cabbage, chilli, choko, corn, cucumber, eggplant, ginger, lettuce, okra, pineapple, potato, pumpkin, radish, rockmelon, senaposai, shallot, silverbeet, snow pea, strawberry, sweet potato, tomato and zucchini.

Organic gardening in the tropics is a different ball game, but you can do it all year round. The challenges are great, but so too are the rewards when the food is on the table. 🌱

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# Build A Wind Turbine

## A Viable Alternative

by Geoff Hennig, Cambrai, SA.

I introduced you to the concept of and basic information about building a wind turbine in the previous issue. This turbine is capable of generating 25 amps at 12 volts at an estimated wind speed of 30 kph. However, due to the nature of 12-volt vehicle alternators, there are improvements which must be made for it to be completely successful.

### ALTERNATOR FIELD SWITCH

When a car alternator is used, to overcome the problem of self-discharging the battery when rotation speed is low or stopped, the addition of an alternator field switch must be made. Make an electronic circuit which switches on the alternator field current only when the turbine is going fast enough to charge the battery. A counter chip and

relay or a modified VOX microphone circuit could be used.

### ALTERNATIVE METHODS

Alternatives to the standard car alternator could be used.

- Use a car DC generator (circa EH Holden) without a voltage regulator/cutout (see figure 5). Instead, a diode is placed in the positive line to the battery. Unlike an alternator, a generator does not require a field current from the battery as it is self-exciting and produces its own. I have since learnt that a car DC generator with a single diode, sourced from an old car alternator, connected in its positive line, is all

Figure 5: Car Generator Wiring Diagram

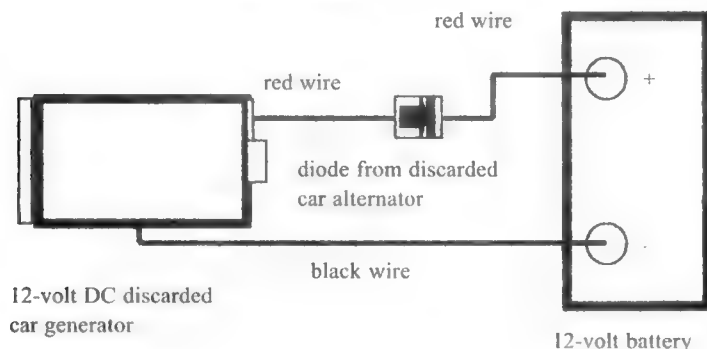


Figure 7: Head Construction

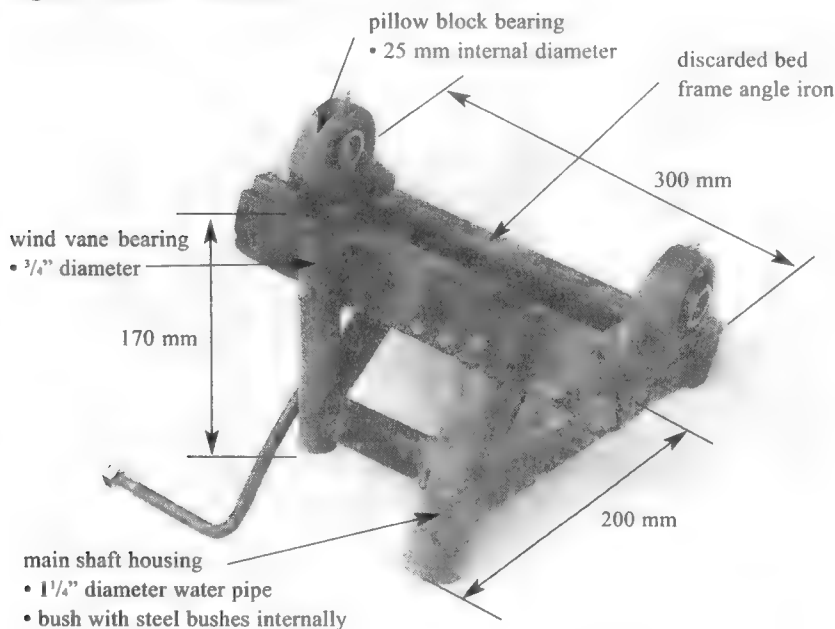
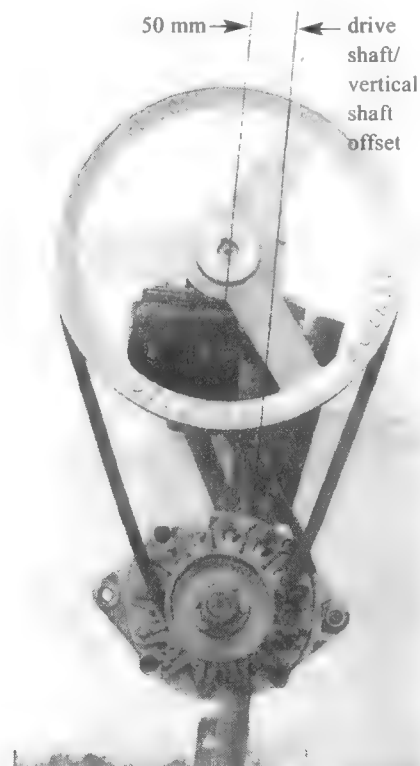


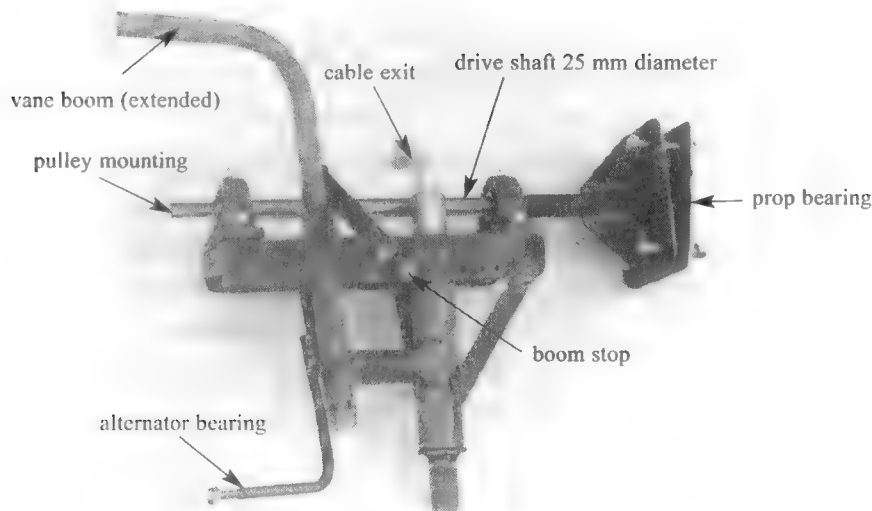
Figure 6: Drive System, Rear View

Belt type A40, driver 250 mm diameter A-section driven original pulley, ratio approximately 4:1.





**Figure 8: Alternator Bearing**



that is needed. No voltage regulator or cut-out is needed. The battery will not overcharge at the lower intermittent charging rates provided by a small wind turbine. This is the simplest and personally preferred system. A voltage regulator is not required.

**Figure 9: Cable Exit, Rear View**  
20 mm diameter electrical conduit



- Use a permanent magnetic field alternator – an alternator with a permanent magnet-type rotating field instead of an electromagnet-type rotating field. Most commercial turbines are made this way. A voltage regulator to match a permanent magnet alternator, such as a large motorcycle type, must be used. Once the battery is charged, excess current generated is dumped across a resistance in the regulator where heating occurs. These regulators have fins on the outside to get rid of the heat generated. They also convert AC to DC with internal diodes. Single phase motorcycle regulators, for alternators with one set of armature coils, and three phase regulators, for alternators with three sets of armature coils, are available. Because they always put a load on the turbine they also act as a turbine speed limiter or safety brake, enabling a simpler system to be made.

- Use a direct drive DC generator. Mount the blade directly to an early car DC generator without any drive system or gearing up. A diode in the positive line will prevent the battery discharging and damaging the generator when rotation ceases. However, to be efficient, its (rotating) armature should be rewound with thinner enamelled copper wire using more turns.

### MOUNTING THE TURBINE

The turbine was mounted (see figures 10 and 12) on a six-metre length of 75-millimetre water pipe, counter-

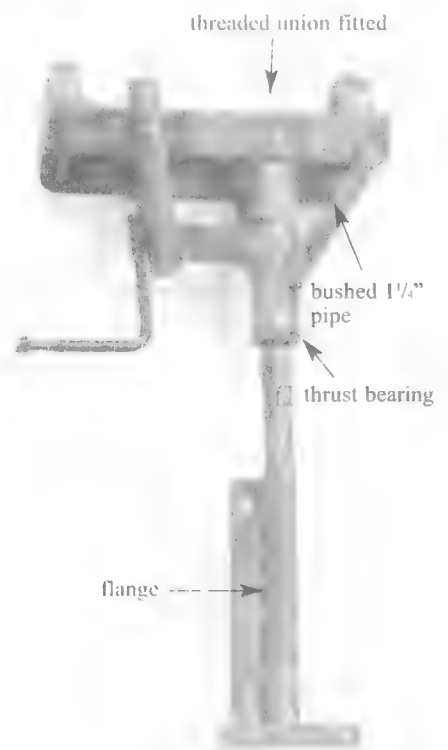
balanced with a 60-litre discarded oil drum. As the drum was filled with water the turbine was easily raised into position. Once in place, the drum was emptied and removed.

### A VIABLE OPTION

Power costs are increasing, as are costs of connection in country areas. Friends who are about to build their own house in the country have been told they will need at least three power poles to be installed, at \$10,000 per pole, for mains connection. As well as installing a solar power system with back-up generator they are considering a back-up wind turbine, which I'm sure will be of great benefit. However, I recently experimented with a petrol generator and discovered that a unit of electricity costs about \$1.30 to produce using petrol as against possibly 20 cents from a provider.

Modern technology has enabled the manufacture of very efficient 12-volt DC to 240-volt AC inverter units. In the past, 32-volt battery packs were

**Figure 10: Main Bearing And Mounting Flange**  
vertical 550 mm x 1/2" diameter pipe  
flange - 200 x 50 x 5 mm



common. Many remote systems in use today employ a large 12-volt battery bank, connected to an inverter to convert the supply to 240 volts AC. However, 24-volt and 48-volt packs may commonly be used.

An old saying goes: If the winds a blowin', the sun ain't shinin'. This may not be at all true. However, two or more sources of 12-volt DC power are definitely better to have on hand than one. Since making the turbine, we have moved to the country where we have had so much wind lately that I wish I had kept the turbine rather than given it away to a partially incapacitated pensioner living further out in the country. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish, preferably by email: wings@lm.com.au

Figure 12: Erecting Turbine

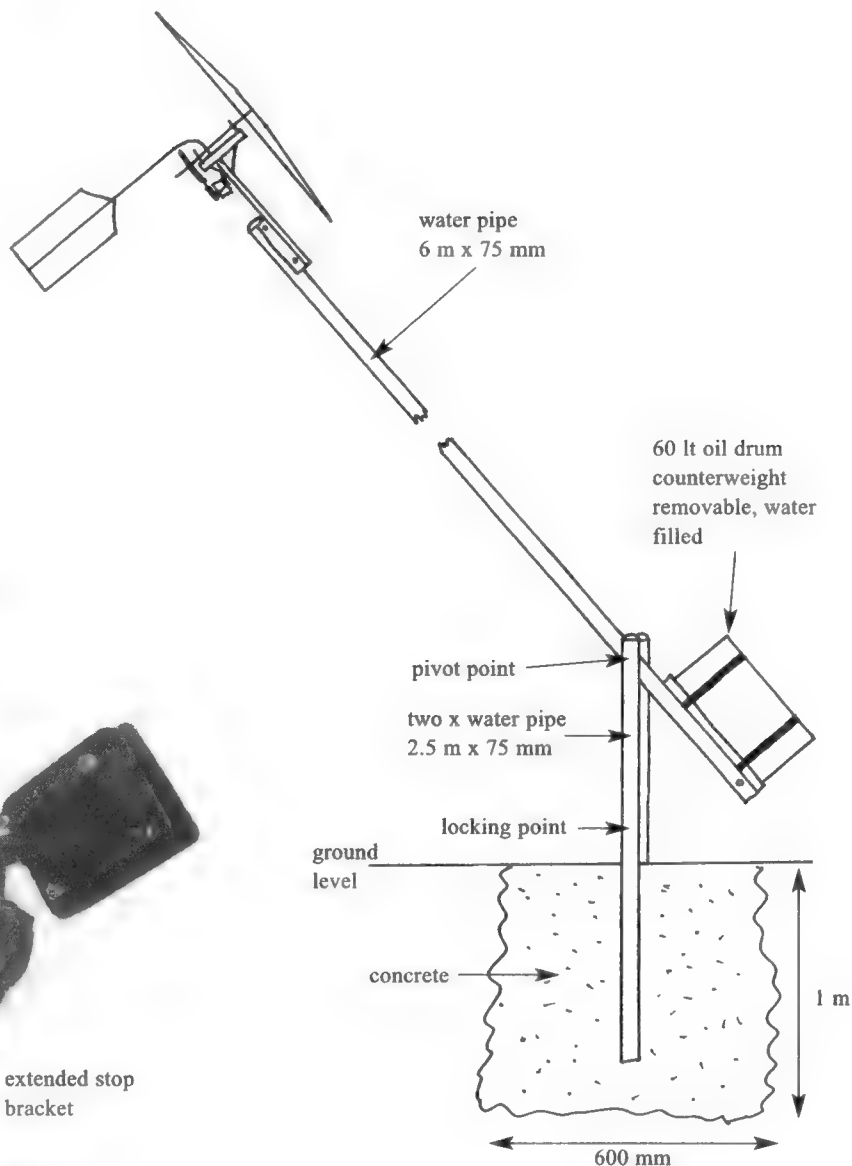
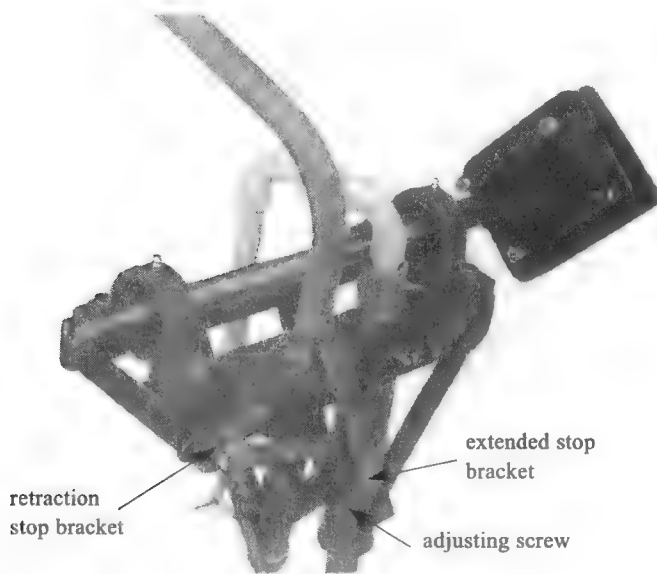


Figure 11: Assembled Head, Vane Retracted



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# WHAT'S ON IN SPRING

## WA HERB CONFERENCE

Feel like a colourful holiday? Visit the spring wildflowers in WA, and while there, why not also go to the Ninth Australian Herb Conference in South Perth on 18 – 20 September. The theme is Living with Herbs, with discussions on medicinal herbs on Saturday, culinary herbs on Sunday and herbs of interest on Monday. Also being held at that time are the Floral and Wine Festival and Kings Park Flower Spectacular. Contact The Herb Society of WA, PO Box 427, Como 6952, or Ericka Stean on email: steaner@bigpond.com

## SA SPINS OUT

The Spinners and Weavers of SA have a number of workshops on in August and September. We like the sound of Spinning with Animal Hair on 14 August, Natural Dyeing on 25 September and Pattern Weaving beginning 15 September. For details, contact the guild on 08-8352-4843 or email: spinweavesa@hotmail.com

## TO MARKET

Sydney has a new market of predominantly certified organic food, health items and art and crafts. It's on from 8am to 2pm every Saturday at Manly West Public School, Hill St, Balgowlah. Stall spaces are available. Call Danielle at Vibrant Markets on 0412-879-923.

## VISIT THE ROYALS

Spring is showtime in many states. First Queensland: Why is it called the

EKKA? No one knows, but this year's Royal Queensland Show is being held on 5 – 14 August, at the RNA Showgrounds, Brisbane. Phone 07-3852-1831 or go to [www.ekka.com.au](http://www.ekka.com.au)

The Adelaide Royal is on 3 – 11 September at the Royal Adelaide Showgrounds. Call 08-8210-5211 or go to [www.royaladelaideshow.com.au](http://www.royaladelaideshow.com.au)

The Royal Melbourne Show is on 16 – 26 September. Call 03-9281-7558 or go to [www.royalshow.com.au](http://www.royalshow.com.au)

## AG-QUIP 2004

The largest agricultural field day of its type in the southern hemisphere, the three-day Ag-Quip attracts 100,000 people and 500 exhibitors representing 2000 companies. It's held on 17 August; contact Rural Press Events 02-6762-2399. The Ag-Quip field day site is at Black Jack Rd, Gunnedah, it's open from 9am – 5pm and it's free.

## GARDEN SHOW LIVE

Want gardening advice or inspirational ideas? The ABC's Gardening Australia Live show will be on in Sydney on 2 – 5 September at Sydney Showground, then Melbourne on 30 September – 3 October at Caulfield Racecourse.

## TASMANIAN CRAFT FAIR

Tassie is having a Display your Dream craft fair at Deloraine over four days from 29 October. The crafts on show and for sale include woodcarvings, hand-blown glassware, leather and metal work, pottery, leadlighting, embroidery,

silver and goldsmithing, oil painting, calligraphy, quilling, tatting, egg carving, spinning, silk screen painting, kite and kaleidoscope making, blacksmithing, wrought iron work, basket weaving, whip making and candlewicking. Free buses will run a continuous shuttle service between exhibits. Contact 03-6368-1137. Admission is \$9 for adults and \$3 for children.

## REGIONAL DOG SHOW

Dog lovers should head to the Northern regional two-day dog show in Gunnedah on 11 and 12 September. Contact 02-6743-3534. Held at Gunnedah Kennel Club Complex, South St, Gunnedah, from 9am.

## AIRING OF THE QUILTS

The historic town of Northampton, north of Geraldton, WA, becomes a sea of colour and activity on 16 October when hundreds of patchwork quilts flutter from the many historical buildings found in the town. A huge variety of crafts will also be on display along with many food stalls. There will be a town crier, market, street parade, band recital, maypole and living scarecrows. The Chiverton House Museum will house a display of memorabilia of bygone days, including restored farm machinery. Contact Northampton Tourist Association 08-9934-1488.

*If you have a suitable event, send details to GR, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661. All submissions printed at the discretion of GR. ♡*

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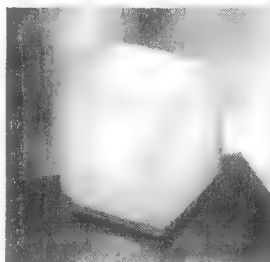
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## ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.

### SALT CRYSTAL LIGHTING

A range of salt crystal ionising lamps from Orion is said to create a tranquil atmosphere that reduces stress and encourages harmony and relaxation to enhance general wellbeing. Health benefits are brought about by an improvement of air quality associated with the emission of negative ions. Polluted city air, in particular, is said to have low levels of negative ions. Orion Salt Crystal Lamps help purify the surrounding air of bacteria, pollen, dust, and smoke by absorbing humidity and then evaporating it. The natural colours of the crystals are created from the fusion of potassium, magnesium and other minerals. Each lamp consists of a hand-finished crystal in an aluminium base.



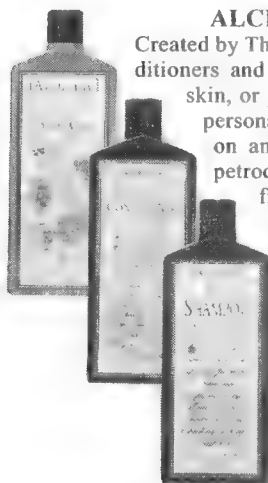
Prices start from \$175.

For information about stockists ph: 1300-305-168.

### SWIMMING POOL TESTING METHOD

Many backyard swimming pools contain dangerous levels of bacteria, amoebae and viruses that are not visible to the naked eye but can cause health problems to pool users. ProTest, a pool maintenance CD-ROM, is a system designed to give pool and spa owners greater control over water quality without the need to visit a pool shop. The step-by-step computer program uses the latest test strip technology to record salt, stabiliser, calcium hardness, pH and chlorine levels in the pool or spa. It then calculates the required levels of chemicals that need to be added to ensure a healthy balance. The pool owner takes a sample of water, dips the test strip into the water and records the colour of the strip into the computer, which works out the rest. ProTest incorporates a pool minder program that reminds owners when to another test is due. Cost of the CD is \$49.95.

For more information on ProTest call Damien Viney on 1800-007-665, or order directly through the website: [www.proswimdirect.com.au](http://www.proswimdirect.com.au).



### ALCHEMY FOR SENSITIVE SKIN

Created by The Purist Company, this range of shampoos, conditioners and body washes will suit anyone with sensitive skin, or people concerned about the ingredients in their personal care products. No products have been tested on animals, nor do they contain artificial colours, petrochemical derivatives or other impurities. The fragrance range is achieved by use of aromatherapy quality essential oils and includes lavender, rosemary, lemon grass, ylang ylang and other favourites. All ingredients are derived from natural substances such as corn, sugar cane, coconut and castor oils and tapioca.

Alchemy products are available from health shops, department stores and some pharmacies, or contact The Purist Company Pty Ltd, PO Box 438, Pymble 2073.

Freecall: 1800-631-283.

### ORGANIC VEGIE SEEDS

Seed company Mr Fothergill's has recently expanded its range of organic vegetable seeds. Crops for this range of seeds are grown on soil developed to organic standard (certified by Organic Farmers and Growers in the UK) over five years and are maintained and weeded without the use of any artificial chemicals. The seed is harvested using traditional methods and no chemicals are used for seed cleaning. Seeds in the organic range include one variety of beetroot, carrot, cucumber, silverbeet, tomato, zucchini, climbing bean and dwarf snap bean. Price per packet is \$3.50.

Look for these seeds at your normal retailer, or contact Mr Fothergill's Seeds Pty Ltd on: 02-4577-5457.

Email: [fothergills@optusnet.com.au](mailto:fothergills@optusnet.com.au)



### SAVE GREY AND RAIN WATER

Blue Bell Garden Products sells a range of simple gadgets to help people save either rainwater or greywater. There are valves and diverters, a device that flushes leaves down the gutter, washing machine and bath outlets, elbows, sleeves and screw caps. One especially nifty looking device is the Deep Water Sava for getting water directly to the roots of trees. This comes in either a 350- or a 550-millimetre length of pipe with a spike on the end. The spike is driven into the ground, a hose screws on to the above-ground end, water fills the pipe and seeps out of holes perforated into the sides.

For more information contact Blue Bell Garden Products, PO Box 208, Balwyn 3103. Ph: 03-9859-9976.

### EZYROLL COMPOST BARREL

Open compost piles attract rodents and other pests and can be very slow to decompose. The Ezyroll compost barrel uses aerobic decomposition to turn lawn mower clippings and vegetable waste into compost in 14 days. The 320-litre barrel is moulded in one piece from UV-stabilised polyethylene and is mounted on a galvanised steel frame. It comes with a five-year warranty.



The unit is easily rolled to the desired position and the compost is released from the barrel by rocking it. It's a device that could interest anyone with back problems who finds the lifting and turning involved in traditional compost making too onerous. Perhaps impatient gardeners will also find its speedy processing attractive.

For more information contact Compost Ezyroll Barrow, PO Box 802, Innaloo 6918. Ph: 08-9445-7050.

Website: [www.compost-ezyroll-barrow.com.au](http://www.compost-ezyroll-barrow.com.au)



## RECENT RELEASES

Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

### WEATHER

**Bruce Buckley, Edward J Hopkins & Richard Whitaker**

This book was snatched eagerly by many hands as it entered the GR office. RR has wrestled it away momentarily for review purposes, but can see farm- and garden-minded colleagues lurking with intent to grab it back at any moment. Primarily a visual guide, the book covers the how, why and what of everything to do with weather. Particularly relevant to readers would be the guide to different types of clouds and what they mean. With photos and descriptions of 74 types, it's comprehensive cloud coverage – no need to stand scratching your head at the sky with this little number. The photos are excellent throughout and well integrated into the text. The sections on el Nino and drought were particularly interesting, as were the history of weather reporting and information on the water cycle, and details of types of storms and lightening were also illuminating. This is an international book, so covers the weather of the entire world, though Australia received the most coverage in the pages on drought.

H/b, 303pp, Pan Macmillan Australia, Level 18, St Martins Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-9285-9100. RRP: \$45.00.

### GROWING AUST NATIVE PLANTS FROM SEED

**For Revegetation Tree Planting and Direct Seeding  
Murray Ralph**

Increasing community recognition of the desperate need to protect and enhance our natural ecosystems has led to a dramatic increase in the propagation of a more diverse range of Aussie native plants, including grasses, lilies and aquatic plants. This book collates much of the available info into one reference and presents it in an easily understood manner. It discusses seed development, viability and dormancy; seed germination and treatments; growing seedlings in containers; and direct seeding. The greater part, however, is an A to Z profiling specific native species and how to grow them from seed, if possible. Black and white drawings clearly explain all relevant steps.

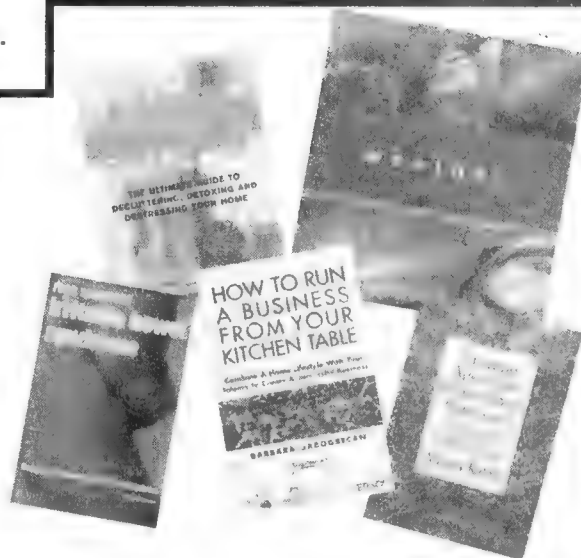
You can't beat free plants, so why not get out there and give it a go. P/b, 156pp, Bushland Horticulture, 270 Pearce Rd, Lyonville 3461. Ph: 03-9517-6773. RRP: \$30.00 incl p&h.

### FOOD SOLUTIONS IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

**Patsy Westcott**

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is one of the most common digestive disorders in the Western world, with one in five people experiencing symptoms, however, it remains one of the most puzzling. The cause is a mystery, and symptoms and treatments are bafflingly diverse. While IBS is not controlled by any single factor, a healthy diet can alleviate symptoms and help you take long-term control of the disease. This book contains tips to help identify foods that trigger IBS, practical steps to control the symptoms, information on conventional and alternative treatments, and over 60 recipes that will help break the cycle of discomfort. The recommended diet is one rich in fresh fruit and vegies, oily fish, nuts, seeds and cereals. Recipes include yellow pepper soup, seafood risotto, melon ice cream and Thai noodles with tofu.

P/b, 224pp, Hamlyn, distributed by Bookwise International, 174 Cormack Rd, Wingfield 5013. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP: \$9.95.



### HOW TO RUN A BUSINESS FROM YOUR KITCHEN TABLE

**Barbara Gabogrecan**

Everyone must have considered at some stage the convenience of staying at home and running your own business from the kitchen stove or herb garden. There is a substantial amount of information you should know first, however, and reading through this book it becomes pretty clear that these strategies, methods, and useful pieces of information will help make the difference between success and failure. Part one covers rights, regulations, planning, structure, technology, marketing and promotion, customer service and finance. Part two covers the different types of home businesses you could run, from creative projects to plants, food, animals, office administration and more. There are some fascinating ideas in these pages. If you are wondering whether your idea would be viable, what the best process would be to bring it about, or would like to run a business but can't think of any ideas, this one is for you.

P/b, 300pp, BAS Publishing, 4A/178 Collins St, Melbourne 3000. Website: [www.basbooks.com.au](http://www.basbooks.com.au) RRP: \$27.45.

### CLEAN SWEEP

**The Ultimate Guide to Decluttering, Detoxing and Destressing Your Home  
Alison Hayes**

This thick, small-format colour book is beautifully illustrated with eco chic photos and arranged in a highly readable format with lots of boxes, dot points and summaries – an easy reference book *par excellence*. RR turned straight to the back to read the glossary of household chemicals, which was satisfyingly thick with warnings. Don't despair, there is a great deal of helpful household information in here, rather like an updated, green Mrs Beeton's. The book deals with each room separately, and provides an outline of how to clean it, what to use and what not to use, hints, etiquette, tips and remedies. It really does cover everything, from defeating dust and damp to how to get organised in life when it's overwhelming, clean silver, remove stains, take care of guests properly, and even get a good night's sleep.

P/b, 360pp, Murdoch Books, GPO Box 1203, Sydney 2001. Ph: 02-8220-2000. RRP: \$19.95.



## DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Suni Miller.

How quickly life moves on from wedding to weeding. One moment I was enjoying swishing around in my floral skirts and drinking champagne with family, friends and happy new hubby, the next I was up to my ears in couch grass, nettles and mud, not a flower to be seen. The new husband was no longer beaming at the world with love, but swearing vilely at the tank stand that refused to be built, and that's when it began to rain. The proverbial honeymoon was over.

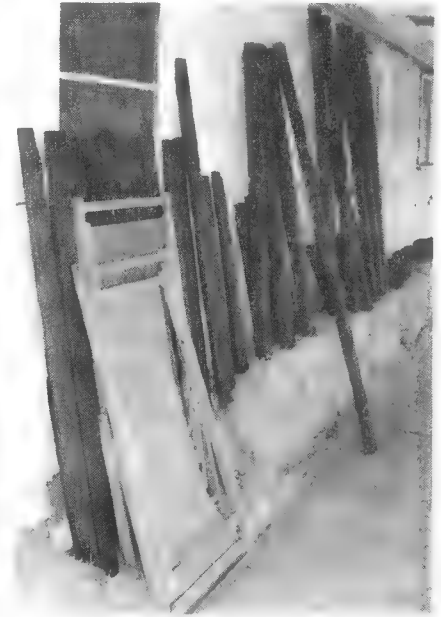
As regular readers will be aware, Marcel and I had an absolutely wonderful wedding day. We had a little tear during our ceremony, which we wrote ourselves; we danced; made silly speeches; and talked all night. The only thing I didn't do was eat, I was so excited, but bubbles kept me going, and we were the last to leave at the end of the night. The day was made even more special, not just by the presence of family and friends, but by the well wishes of so many generous and lovely GR readers. Marcel was madly touched to be welcomed into the big GR family we all make up, and we both send heartfelt thanks to everyone who thought, wrote and wished us well.

We were warned that we could feel a little flat after the heady days of being a bride- and groom-to-be. Frankly, I was looking forward to getting back on top after months of rank neglect of planting, mowing, pruning, weeding, washing, cleaning, painting, sanding and various other forms of 'ing'ing. Happily, too, a very dear friend from boarding school days got engaged soon after our day, so when knee-deep in mud and weeds we at least had one glamorous occasion to look forward to.

First, of course, we had to reassure the only child that he had not been abandoned. Pablo the puss returned from his sojourn at Megg's place healthy-coated and fatter in the chops, but with some disturbing new habits he would never have been allowed to get away with at home. Not only does he wake us up at 6.30am on the dot, quite handy when the alarm doesn't work on a weekday, less appealing on Saturdays, but now he



Our shiny new green tank . . .



and its stand, yet to be assembled.

likes to spend long periods scratching his paws up and down the glass windows, making a noise reminiscent of fingers down the blackboard. He knows he's not allowed out at night, so can only be performing for his own amusement, or ours. I complained to my husband that this noise at 4am each morning was driving me batty, and he said in astonishment, 'What noise?' I shouldn't have been surprised he'd slept through it. On our brief, warm and hazy honeymoon, spent on a suitably inexpensive tropical island, I woke up with a start in the middle of night. Next moment, the whole building – furniture, light fittings, TV and all – began shaking violently. Remembering our mothers' dire warnings of doom when we first mentioned travelling overseas, I assumed it was a bomb, but as it continued I realised with cautious alarm that it was an earthquake. It was quite an eerie and unforgettable feeling in the dead of the night. As it wound down, Marcel turned over in bed and mumbled, 'Stop it darling'.

'It's an earthquake, you whacker', I told him. He sat up in the final dying shudders and said that he thought I had been shaking the bed for a joke. Now,

when friends inquire about our week away, Marcel blithely tells them we lived through a 5.0-strength earthquake and it wasn't anything at all really. Barely lasted for a second. Nothing I say will convince him otherwise because he slept through the worst of it! No major damage was caused, so we were open slather for gleeful vindication from our mothers that their predictions had in part come true, and questionable honeymoon jokes by our friends.

After all this living life on the edge, we returned home to the first autumn rains and a note in the mail that our tank was arriving. Purchased during the closing minutes of a farming expo, after months of homework, this tank was going to solve all our garden watering problems, and would be such a financial boon it would even make up for that time we accidentally left the hose on. The new tank was made of groovy green plastic, which tastefully coordinated with the front door, and would be positioned at a far more sensible spot than the old, thus doubling our water harvest. The crucial spot was in the middle of the driveway, but no matter.

The ultimate challenge, however, was the tank stand. With a shed full of

junk, including the innards of a couple of walls we'd excavated from the house, Marcel was determined to make the tank stand from wholly recycled materials, all found at home. The wood was no problem, though would require a lot of 90-degree braces to connect that bit to this bit to that, and we already had the paint, but it looked like the steel braces might have to be purchased. I thought the tentative structure looked like the base of the Eiffel Tower, and rickety with it, but Marcel assured me the tank guy said it would last longer than the tank. Not sure how Marcel described it to him over the phone, but the tank man should know tank stands. Marcel had been going to Avers on and off before the wedding to desultorily lay the pieces out in various possible arrangements, but now the pressure was on. We no longer had the excuse of a wedding to plan and the tank was coming in a matter of hours! No amount of swearing was going to be able to bolt 200 or so small pieces of hardwood together in a day, and anyway, he was still painting them matching green, which was not only attractive, but necessary for waterproofing purposes. The tank was dumped unceremoniously in the driveway and abandoned, and we decided we'd figure out how to lift it onto the future tank stand/French-style tower construction later. After all, David was known for alarming feats of strength; he could always advise us.

The next weekend we went to Avers with passion in our hearts and tank stands on our lips, but as soon as we arrived it began to rain, buckets and buckets of the stuff. Not tank stand building weather. Marcel stood in the doorway, looking wistfully at the water running down the tank's serrated sides and away down the drive, then rang some friends to come down for a long country lunch and we made a social weekend of it. Plenty of red wine, but no tank stand.

We were more lucky the following weekend and at last the boards were all painted. Marcel counted the 90-degree metal braces required. Off to the hardware store he went, and returned very cross indeed. Those braces were expensive. Saving money by using many small bits of wood from around the

place meant we needed hundreds of dollars worth of bracing! That wasn't right. Under the flow of invective, I reminded myself I was a bride and retired to the couch grass. This filthy stuff must have sensed we were distracted with weddings in the last six months, and had embedded itself deeply into every garden bed, while never deigning to put a runner out to the lawn, which was in drastic need of reinforcements. I've put down cardboard, newspaper, mulch and even weed mat, but not one has proved a challenge to the indomitable couch. It's my own personal tank stand, I suppose.

Marcel descended into a depression over the tank and even spent a weekend doing the mowing, unheard of previously, so I thought I'd try and get a few jobs done. If he had a chance, could he plant the mixed bulbs I'd bought to help a local primary school? They were all pink tones, of course, to remind us of the wedding. I spent quite some time in the car describing the difference between up and down for bulbs of all shapes and sizes, and went to work faintly dubious, but with fingers crossed. I got a midday phone call: 'You know those hideous old roses along the drive?' I did. 'Well, I dug them all out, and you should see the roots.' I was philosophical about this loss, as the stems were nasty, thorny and gnarled, and their blooms in alternating shades of puce and orange-red didn't fit into my long-term colour palette. 'Go on', I said. 'Well, I planted the bulbs in the holes left by the roses. I could tell which way was up with all the varieties except one, so I just guessed with those. The thing is, I had to dig quite a bit to get the roses out, and now there's two long human-sized earth patches. The police have driven past three times and to be honest, it looks like I've been burying people in the garden.'

Happily, the police did not make him disinter my bulbs, and although the lawn does look a little patchy along the driveway, recent green shoots show my trust was well-founded, and the bulbs went in feet down, face up, though that questionable variety is yet to show. We burned the hoary old rose roots with great relish in the fireplace one freezing cold day, and will be sticking to more low-maintenance and

harmoniously coloured plants in future.

A little time off the job helped Marcie figure out that bolts are cheaper than braces, and we only needed 20, not 200. He's painted and sealed the hardwood to within an inch of its life. Now the back verandah is a lumber yard of shiny green hardwood arranged against the wall in tapered gradations of size and thickness. Meanwhile, the rain is coming thick and fast, the shortest day of the year has passed us by, winter is waning, and all that lovely water is overflowing out of our reliable black plastic 20-litre buckets. We can't allow a drop into the tank or we'll never move it. They aren't light, those things. The car's parked on the lawn, and our useless bloody tank looks flash as flash and really shows the place up. Say anything to him? I'm not that foolish! And to be honest, much as I've tried, my progress with the couch grass isn't any better than his with the tank stand. With no wedding on the cards, you would think we would be able to manage something by spring. Then again, I do have a 30th birthday to plan. ☘

## — PENPALS —

Hi! My name is Yvette. I am 32, married, with one child. I'm looking for penpals in a similar situation and with similar interests. I love animals, gardening, music, nature, feng shui and lots more.

**Yvette,**

**PO Box 28, NEWSTEAD 7250.**

I am a 51-year-old married Christian lady. I live on a farm and would like penpals. My interests include crotchetting, knitting, gardening and reading.

**Lynda Kay,**

**C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.**

I am a 47-year-old bloke who is interested in writing, poetry, art, craft, music, dancing, gardening, horses, semi-subsistence farming and a lot more besides. I'm self-employed and love writing and receiving letters. Does anyone else still enjoy communicating in this wonderful old-fashioned way? If so, please write to me.

**Mark Porter,**

**6 Thomas St, Currawarna NSW 2650.**

# GRASSIFIEDS

## HOW TO ADVERTISE

Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 165 is 30 August, 2004.** Please do not fax ads.

Sender's Name .....	For issues no/s .....
Address .....	Classification .....
Postcode .....	Cost .....
<b>Cost for advertisements is 85c per word</b>	

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**PEACEFUL GETAWAY, NORTHERN RIVERS AREA**, 48 timbered ac, cleared crk flats, suit camping. Secure cabin with cellar, gas fridge & cooktop, potbelly heater, some furniture. Enclosed vegie garden, secure machinery shed with tractor. Generator, pump & irrigation from crk, 9000 gal tanks. \$100,000. Ph: 02-6635-1311.

**FAR NORTH COAST NSW**, 3 b/r timber home on 10 ac, 15 mins to Lismore & 30 mins to coast. Perfect alternative lifestyle. Details & photos: [www.privatesale.com.au/02485](http://www.privatesale.com.au/02485). Ph: 02-6629-8584.

**PARADISE, 80 ACRES, MILTON**: Own your own nat pk, perm crk, ferns, orchids, caves. No neighbours 3 sides, 60 km view Morton Nat Pk, 20 mins beach & town, 3 b/r BV home & cabin wilderness escape. \$750,000 ONO. Ph: 02-4457-3003, 0421-883-175.

**TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES SOUTH** of Wagga, NSW, 25 mins to airport with daily 1 hr flights to Sydney & Melbourne; 156 ac, half native grasses, half forest; 7 paddocks, 4 dams & crk. Superb views, abundant wildlife. School bus stop 6 km away. Double brick, 3 b/r, solar powered home, air conditioned. Reluctant sale. \$415,000. Ph: Peter John: 0407-267-411. View photos on: [www.riverinahomes.com.au](http://www.riverinahomes.com.au) ID no 101414252.

**UNIQUE FIFTY-ACRE FOREST RETREAT** in the Tantawangalo area east of Bombala. Ideal weekender surrounded by South East Forest Nat Pk & state forest. Mostly timbered with 5 ac cleared surrounded by 6' fencing; 30' c/van with shower, flush toilet, generator; lge dam with pump; lge insulated dog kennels with yards. \$120,000. Ph: 02-6493-2434 after 6pm.

**PICTURESQUE HANNAM VALE**, between Port Macquarie & Taree, 30 mins Laurieton & beaches. Spacious modern home on 10 ac facing nth, panoramic views, 4 good kikuyu paddocks, spring-fed dam, 3 dble b/r, 1 bath, open brick fireplace, ample water storage. Peace, privacy, sml friendly community. \$445,000. Ph: 02-6556-7685. See: [www.diysell.com.au?P12562](http://www.diysell.com.au?P12562).

**LAND-SHARING COOPERATIVE**, NSW, 60 km east of Warwick & 145 km to Brisbane, 25 mins from town, in the Border Ranges 5 km from Qld border. Two shares avail in 6-share co-op, 812 ac block with only 50 ac cleared, 1200 m mountain views with Koreelah National Forest & World Heritage Rainforest on 3 sides, Koreelah Crk with 40 m gorges on other. Another gorge system with year-round crystal clear water, falls & swimming holes through centre of block. \$75,000. Contact Martin: 07-5492-9363. Email: [mkomaus@hotmail.com](mailto:mkomaus@hotmail.com)

**NORTHERN NSW**, 12 ac on hamlet, 3 b/r house, lge verandahs, swimming pool, dble garage + lge studio with loft & bathroom. Electricity, solar, perm crk, water tanks, f/trees, bordering nat pk. \$345,000. Ph: 02-6674-0937.

**LAND FOR SALE**, 1/2 ac block, 150 m to boat ramp, fenced, dam, power avail, walk to shops and bottle-o, 25 mins to Foster by car or boat, no development application, Rural 1A, great for camping. \$47,000. Ph: Paula, 02-6658-2042.

### QUEENSLAND

**NANANGO, QUEENSLAND**, 8+ ac (with crk), unimproved. Water & elec avail. \$36,000. Ph: 02-4990-9635.

**BUNDABERG AREA**: high-set 3 b/r home on 16 ha (40 ac), not flooding. Corner property, partly cleared. Large shed with toilet & shower, connected to power & water, 2 x 5000 gal concrete r/water tanks, 2 dams, close to Deepwater Nat Pk & beaches. For sale due to illness. \$229,000 ONO plus contents of shed (ride-on mower, spare pump, building material, tools) for additional \$8000. Ph: 07-4156-6289.

**SECLUDED TWENTY-FIVE ACRES** on hilltop near Stanthorpe. Solar heated brick home with solar appliances. Well-established lawns & gardens, with f/trees & vegie patch. Suit self-suff couple. \$190,000. Ph: 07-4685-2180.

**CRYSTAL WATERS PERMACULTURE VILLAGE** (Maleny): Extraordinary hexadome house with thatched roof, 4 b/rs, on 1 ac with landscaped garden to permaculture principles. \$325,000. Ph: 07-5494-4539, or email: [ayeshadorb@pacific.net.au](mailto:ayeshadorb@pacific.net.au)

More at: [www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au/crystalwaters/realestate](http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au/crystalwaters/realestate)



# GRASSIFIEDS

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

### QUEENSLAND

**MOUNT PERRY:** 100 km NW of Bundaberg, 2 3/4 ac, urban area, subdivided into 11 blocks. Power, ph & town water avail. Three-road frontage. Block well drained. Yesterday's mining village with gold fossicking still possible. Mining venture started again. Live on one & sell others. Price \$28,000 ONO. Ph: 07-4156-6289.

**TWO HOUSES PLUS COTTAGE:** Gympie, 40 ac, 25 mins to Gympie, 10 mins to shop, pub, school, PO. Very quiet, secluded. Vegie garden, orchard, horse paddock, 5 dams, lge lagoon, swimming, fishing, well timbered, sheds, bore site, crk bisects property. Power, ph, mail, school buses at gate – primary & high. House 1: timber, mudbrick, 5 b/r, lge verandahs, lettable \$200/wk. House 2: timber, 4 b/r, private, lettable \$150/wk. Cottage: 1 b/r self-cont, lettable \$90/wk. Close to Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach, Fraser Is. Approved for two dwellings. \$350K. Ph: 07-5494-7004.

Email: centrent@dnet.aunz.com

### VICTORIA

**FARMHOUSE CIRCA 1900** – relocated on 11 ac in Gippsland, Vic. Original ornate ceilings, fireplaces & leadlights reinstated. Five b/rs, lge kitchen, lounge/dining, laundry & bathroom ready for purchaser to finish in whatever style they choose. Power & water connected with eco friendly waste system. Stands on prime horticultural land bounded by healthy crk & corridors of native plantings just 2 km from town of Warragul & 1 hr from Melbourne. Visible from M1 Freeway on the Tourist Trail & ideal for commercial/organic/residential operation. \$440,000. Ph: Jenny: 08-8723-0222 BH or 08-8725-1327 AH.

**OTWAYS, SOUTH-WEST VICTORIA,** 2 hrs from Melb, 1 hr Geelong, 7 ac in high rainfall area. Easy walk to Gellibrand River, township, school. Newly renovated 3 b/r home in beautiful bush setting with estab garden. Includes bungalow, sheds, stables, paddocks, dam, tanks. Move straight in – a dream! \$260,000. Ph: 03-5236-6478.

**GRAMPIANS REGION,** 20 ac, a character filled four b/r octagonal mudbrick house with glass dome roof feature, OFP, solar hot water, also a separate 15 sq gable building (currently set up as commercial kitchen), 40 x 40 shed/workshop, 3-bay shed, 3 dams, 5 x 22,000 lt tanks. \$320,000. Ph: 03-5356-2203.

**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS VICTORIA:** for sale 15 ac rich farming land bordering Wombat State Forest, 15 mins from Daylesford. Undulating green pasture, amazing views over forest with volcanic soil. Ideal for hobby farm, alternative lifestyle or weekend. High rainfall, 4 distinct seasons, some snow & great neighbours. Ph: Penny or David, 03-5348-5698.

DEADLINES: GR 165 – 30 AUGUST  
GR 166 – 29 OCTOBER

**YEA/HIGHLANDS AREA,** suit conservationist, self-sustainable lifestyle, secluded native bush retreat, 50 ac, 2 crks, 25 sq home of 8 lge rooms. \$350,000. Ph: owners, 0500-511-144. View at: [www.noagentsproperty.com.au](http://www.noagentsproperty.com.au) ID Highland.

**AVOCA, PYRENEES:** Solar alternative lifestyle, western red cedar home on scenically located acres, gum tree plantation, healthy environment, many features. \$285,000 incl machinery. Ring for details: 03-5466-2209.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**LOWER EYRE PENINSULA,** 42 ha (107 ac), planted with fodder trees & grasses, incl 8 ha (20 ac) of red gums under Bushcare agreement, abuts conservation pk of solid bush & trees. Attractive well appointed 4 b/r Hebel block house, 10 yrs old, well insulated, great views, good carpeting, tiled floors. Organic vegie garden, 40 fruit & nut trees, 140 KI water tanks, well with solar pump & water to all 6 paddocks. Stockyard for goats or sheep. Sheds for implements, chooks, ducks & garden, 3-bay implement shed. On sealed rd 35 km from Pt Lincoln. School bus & mail at gate. \$395,000. Ph: 08-8685-2219. Email: wesnos@chariot.net.au

### TASMANIA

**NATURE LOVERS' HOMESTEAD** – NW Tasmania: Let the rest of the world go by when you move to this private home, which can almost sleep an army. Wake up here with panoramic views – watch a wedge-tailed eagle glide through the morning mist. This 5, 6 or 7 b/r log cabin is set on 28 ha (69 ac), which incl 45 ac of native Tasmanian r/forest. The fern-lined tributary of Dowlings Crk meanders through the property & provides habitat to giant freshwater lobster and trout. Numerous bush trails are available for the kids to explore on motorbikes or horses. The home of gigantic proportions will suit the larger family or those who love to have visitors & entertain. Ideally located 12.5 km from the Bass Highway & approx 12 mins to Wynyard & airport. \$340,000. Contact Casey at PRDnationwide Trevor Spinks: 03-6452-1111. More details on: [www.spinks.com.au](http://www.spinks.com.au)

**INSTANT HOUSE FOR REMOVAL** to your property in northern Tasmania. Should fit on truck in one piece. Living area & kitchen, wooden outer walls & floor. \$10,000. Inspect at Leith. Ph: 0438-282-736.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquiries. Call us on 03-5792-4000.

**'CLOUD 9', UTTER PRIVACY:** east coast, 21 ac, approx 2 cleared & fenced, the rest mature forest & manfern gullies. Amazing wildlife, stunning ocean & valley views, bordering state forest reserve. Fruit trees, perm spring water. Spacious 3 b/r home, central heating, polished floors, huge verandahs, semi-furnished. New solar setup, gas & wood cooking, heating & water options. Five mins to pristine coastline & only 12 mins to township, school etc. \$250,000. Ph: 03-6372-2139 after 6.30pm. PO Box 193, ST MARYS 7215.

**WHITE HILLS,** 27 ac, new split-level brick home, 10 mins Launceston. Very special buyer required to protect this piece of native Tasmania & its wildlife. Boasting over 140 species of native Tasmanian plants & trees, resident wombats, devils, bandicoots & many more. With 46 bird species, incl visiting wedge-tails & breeding wood ducks on the massive dam that is overlooked by the home, featuring more double glazed windows than walls to take advantage of the 360° views overlooking Launceston & snow-covered mountain ranges. The home offers open plan living, all round verandah, decks, polished wood & slate floors, spa, internal feature o/fire, double lock-up Colorbond garage, Biocycle, tank & mains water. With a perfect balance of native pasture for grazing & vegies this is a disappearing lifestyle for the plants, animals & us this close to Launceston. Asking price \$480,000. Ph: 0407-849-052 AH.

## FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, NEW SOUTH WALES:** 270+ ac property for lease (1 – 3 yrs +). Cute bush cottage with r/water: sink/toilet/shower, gas stove, stone f/place. Includes 4 dams, organic fruit & nut trees & stunning escarpment views. \$225 p/w. Ring Ashley: 0418-645-123.

**COTTAGE FOR RENT – NORTHERN TASMANIA:** Cottage located in the beautiful mountain valley of Jackeys Marsh 20 km sth of Deloraine in the central nth of Tasmania. Nearest town is Meander 8 km, with school, shop & PO. Surrounded on 2 sides by forest, with abundant wildlife, this cottage would suit a self-suff individual or couple. Available for a year or more. \$80 p/w. Solar power, gas hot water, unpolluted mountain streams, fantastic views. Cabin also avail for short-term rental. \$30 per night or \$100 p/w. Campervans welcome. Ph: Rosemary, 03-6333-0804 or email: [cadwood@bigpond.com](mailto:cadwood@bigpond.com)

**CARETAKER COUPLE FOR GRAZING PROPERTY** Blue Mountains area. Cottage in exchange for maintenance, gardening, cattle duties. Experience & written references essential. Reply in writing: PO Box A90, SYDNEY SOUTH 1235.

# GRASSIFIEDS

## FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

**PERSON TO SHARE LARGE COMFORTABLE HOUSE** near Taree with independent working woman. Beautiful bush, gardens, crk, walking tracks. Negotiable rent for active upkeep contribution. Ph: Kathy, 02-6556-9012.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**INTERESTED IN LIVING UNDERGROUND?** Let's talk. Ph: 07-5485-7348.

**HOUSE ON BD ORGANIC FARM, NW NSW.** Includes milking cow, chook house, vegie garden, sml tractor & casual mechanical & farm work. Fax your skills & dream to: 02-6793-8606. **WANTED** – couple, n/s, n/d, as working partners in new house & garden maintenance business. No money required, c/van & car supplied. Ph: 07-4945-2409. See website: [www.mikestonesplace.com](http://www.mikestonesplace.com)

## WANTED TO RENT/ CARETAKE

**COUPLE MOVING** to South Burnett, Qld, start of January 2005, wanting accom, willing to negotiate. Ph: Robert & Madonna, 07-3299-3767, or email: [weave777@hotmail.com](mailto:weave777@hotmail.com)

## BUSINESS FOR SALE

**HERVEY BAY**, busy Bowen Therapy Centre, located in a beautiful location near the sea. Ph: Pat, 07-4125-5122.

## COMMUNITIES/SHARES

**SHARE WITH HOUSE IN ESTABLISHED MO** community of 4 households, 140 ac, 35 mins from Bega. Organic garden, orchard, poultry, milking goats, beef cattle. VCA, perm crk & forest. School bus to front gate. Option to rent before buying. Approximately \$120,000. Ph: 02-6493-2032, 02-6493-2026, 02-6493-2019.

**A NEW HOLISTIC COMMUNITY** is being estab at the Ontos Health Retreat in East Gippsland. Based on the premise that All is One and One is All (there is), we honour the truth in all paths while recognising the illusion of separation. Our focus is longer term healing on all levels, facilitated by caring friends, holistic treatments, organic foods and the natural environment. We are welcoming new residents and volunteers to help rebuild the kitchen-dining area. We need a person with good building skills. We can provide good accom & meals. Please contact Fred on 03-5155-0372.

## PUBLICATIONS

**HOME EDUCATION**, for info send SAE to: Home Education Network, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

### PLACING AN AD?

See page 75 for details

**FREE 'GETTING STARTED WITH HOME-SCHOOLING'** booklet: send an SAE to: Beverley Paine, PO Box 371, YANKALILLA, SA 5203. Website: [www.beverleypaine.com](http://www.beverleypaine.com)

**'THE MIRACLE OF MULCH'** by Mary Horsfall: Mulch builds up organic matter, fertility and biodiversity in your soil for long-term garden health. *The Miracle Of Mulch* describes the vital mulching know-how that enables you to save water, save money and help the environment by recycling organic 'waste', conserve and improve soil & have a healthy, lush, productive garden. Easy-to-read layout, great pics. \$20 for signed copy from author, incl postage, \$35 for two. Ph: 0417-569-411, or write to: Notable Products, PO Box 101, EUROA 3666.

**GRASS ROOTS MAGAZINES** issues 34 – 106 incl \$5 ea, in binders at \$19 ea, 10 copies *Bumper Book* \$10 ea. *Earth Garden* nos 53 – 97 incl \$4 ea, *Australian Heritage* nos 1 – 7 incl. All magazines are bound. Ph: 03-9789-2376.

**'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE'**, is a cooperatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin & other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for \$20, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480. *Beyond the Rainbow* – literacy mag. Sub: \$18 per year for 6 editions. Email: [nimbinnews@nrg.com.au](mailto:nimbinnews@nrg.com.au)

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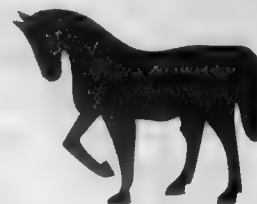
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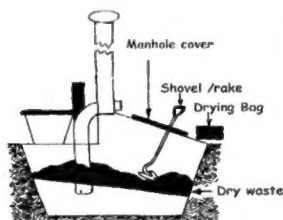
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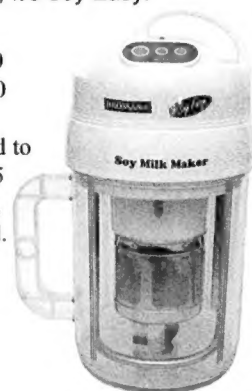
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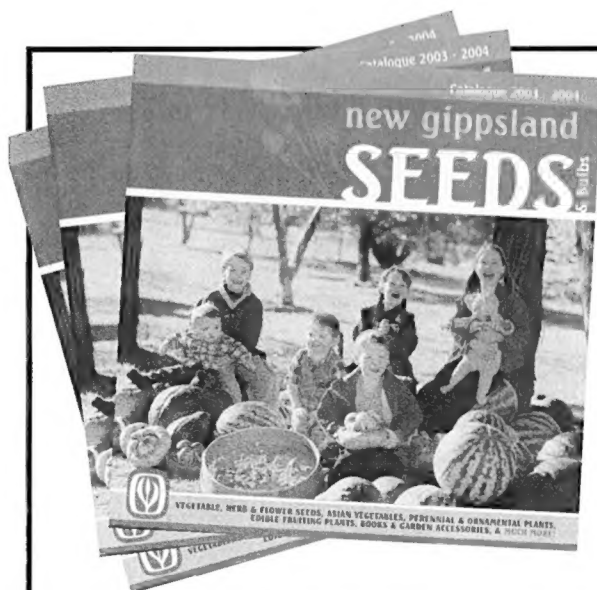
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